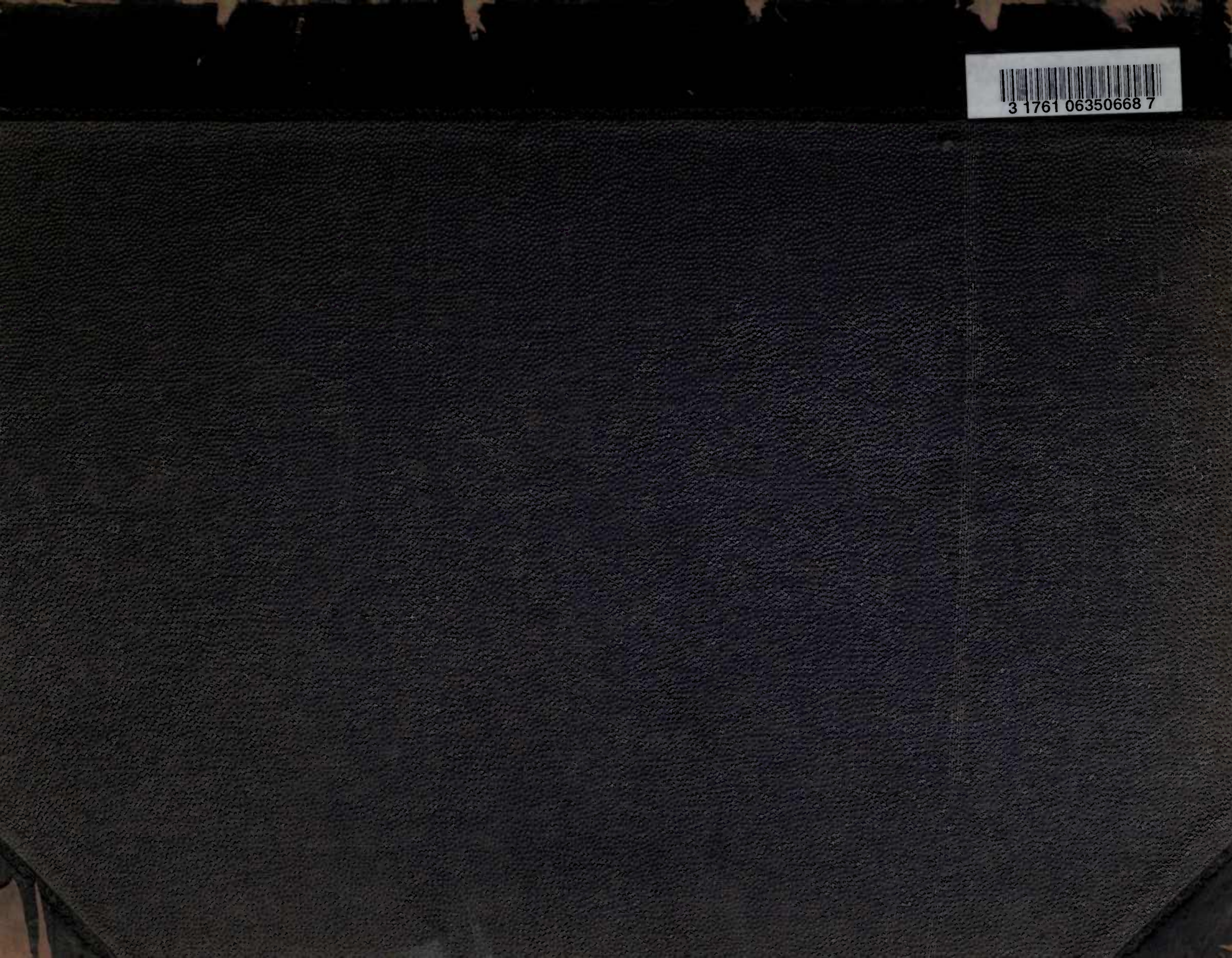

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A

CRITICAL

COMMENTARY AND PARAPHRASE

ON THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

AND THE

APOCRYPHA.

BY

PATRICK, LOWTH, ARNALD, WHITBY, AND LOWMAN.

A NEW EDITION:

CORRECTED BY THE

REV. J. R. PITMAN, M. A.

ALTERNATE EVENING PREACHER AT THE FOUNDLING AND MAGDALEN HOSPITALS.

IN SIX VOLUMES,
VOL. III.

CONTENTS:

JOB,
PSALMS,
POVERBS,
ECLESIASTES,
SONG OF SOLOMON,
ISAIAH,
JEREMIAH, AND
THE LAMENTATIONS.

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THE

BOOKS

OF

JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES,

AND THE

SONG OF SOLOMON,

Paraphrased:

WITH

ARGUMENTS TO EACH CHAPTER, AND ANNOTATIONS THEREUPON.

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

DR. SYMON PATRICK,

LORD BISHOP OF ELY.

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A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE BOOK OF JOB.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM, EARL OF BEDFORD,

Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, &c.

MY VERY GOOD LORD AND PATRON.

My Lord,

THOUGH I have not pursued the design, which I have long had in my thoughts, of making some public acknowledgment of my obligations to your Lordship, for placing me, when I thought not of it, in this station which I hold in Covent-Garden; yet I have only deferred it, till the most proper opportunity, as it seems to me, for this small expression of my gratitude. For I could not have prefixed your Lordship's name to any work of mine, which I believe would have been so acceptable, as this wherewith I now present you; desiring it may remain as a lasting testimony of the sense I have of the favours I have received from your Lordship. In whom, as I have always observed a particular veneration and affection for the Holy Scriptures; so I know to be a constant reader of them: and therefore humbly offer this assistance to your Lordship, for the understanding of the oldest book (as I have shewn) of that sacred volume, which, I am confident, you esteem above all earthly treasures.

There have been many large volumes written for its explication: which will cost abundance of time and pains to peruse; and after all, the design and scope of the whole may not be understood, while the reader's mind stays so long in the several parts. I have therefore taken quite another course, and only given the sense of it in a compendious, but perspicuous Paraphrase (or Metaphrase rather, as the ancients would have called it), which is not much longer than the text, put into other words. It would have been more easy to have enlarged it, than it was to make it thus short; which I the rather chose to do, not merely because it will be more useful for those who have little leisure, or less money, but because thereby I have preserved, I persuade myself, the majesty of the book; and made it still look, not like the word of a man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God.

Which I could never have presented to your Lordship and the world more seasonably than now; when the state of our affairs is so dangerously perplexed, that we cannot stand upright, nor preserve our souls from sinking into the saddest fears or discontents, or some such troublesome passion, without a strong confidence in the most wise, just, and merciful providence of the Almighty; which orders things, in unsearchable ways, to the good of those that steadfastly adhere unto him in faithful obedience. Which is so admirably represented in this holy book, that one cannot read it seriously, and not be moved to resign the conduct of ourselves, and all that concerns us, unto God's most blessed will and pleasure; to wait patiently for him, as the Psalmist speaks, and keep his way; not to be disheartened by any trouble that befals us, much less forsake our integrity; but still expect "the end of the Lord," as St. James speaks, *i. e.* the issue to which he will bring our troubles; persuading ourselves that he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy; and therefore, as he doth not love to grieve us by laying afflictions on us, so is wont many times to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil; and to produce it by such unexpected means, as shall surprise us with the greater admiration of his wisdom and goodness.

For a great reader of ancient writers tells us, "He hath observed, in the histories of all ages, that the great events which determine the fate of great affairs do happen less frequently according to design, than by accident and occasion. Our enterprises here below are derived from above; and we but engines and actors of pieces that are composed in heaven. 'Homo histrio, Deus vero poeta est:' *God is the sovereign poet;* and we cannot refuse the part which he appoints us to bear in the scene. All our business is to act it well; cheerfully complying with his orders concerning us, and submitting ourselves to the direction of his providence."

To which, and all other religious courses, did we more heartily apply ourselves, there is no doubt but that in this book we might read God's gracious intentions towards this

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church and kingdom. Which his most merciful providence would bring, as he did his servant Job, through all these clouds which now encompass us, into a splendour incomparably beyond all that wherein hitherto we have appeared. Why should we despair of it, when he shews, by the unexpected discovery which he hath made of the designs of our enemies against us, that he hath no mind to cast us off, if we will not carelessly cast away ourselves, by the continual neglect of our duty to him?

God of his infinite goodness awaken all our hearts, to make such a good use both of that deliverance, and of our present distress (which is so great that we see no way out of it, but by his power alone to whom Job owed his resurrection), that we may, in the issue, be the more happy, and the better established, for having been so miserably unsettled. In which prayer, I am sure your Lordship will cordially join with,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble

and affectionate servant,

SY. PATRICK.

April 19, 1679.

PREFACE.

THE study of the Holy Scriptures is so much recommended to us by the Scriptures themselves, and hath been judged so necessary by the holy doctors of the church, that St. Chrysostom (who was wont to press this duty with great earnestness, not only in his sermons, but in his private discourses with his people) adventures to say, (Hom. 3. in Lazar. tom. v. 243.) that "a man cannot, he cannot be saved, unless he be conversant in this spiritual reading." But, as the neglect of them is very dangerous when men are able to read them; so the reading them without understanding must needs be unprofitable. Though a Christian (as the forenamed great person speaks) can no more be without the Scriptures, than an artificer without his tools; yet we must acknowledge, that he will make but ill work with them in many places, unless he be instructed how to use and apply them to the purpose for which they were designed. Whosoever, therefore, shall assist the minds of Christians, by giving a clear meaning of them (in which that holy father employed much of his time), it is certain, doth great service to God, and to their souls. For this contributes much to the honour of the Holy Scriptures (which want nothing to make them reverenced by considering men, but to be understood), and it invites men to the reading them, and it conveys the heavenly truth easily and delightfully into their minds.

Which hath moved me to attempt the explaining of the most ancient book in the whole Bible, by way of a short paraphrase. In which, if I have not always tied myself to our English translation (which ever gives an excellent sense of the original words), it was because I thought another meaning sometimes more agreeable to the whole discourse; which I have endeavoured to carry on coherently, from first to last. But if the matter would bear it, I have, when I met with a word of two senses, expressed them both. And where I found any difficulty, I consulted with such interpreters as are of best note in the church; being unwilling to do any thing without the warrant of some or other of them. I was forced, indeed, here and there to follow only my own judgment; but not without the appearance of very urgent reasons; of which, if I should give an account, by adding notes to those places, it would make this, which I intend for common use, swell into too big a volume. I have only, therefore (in the argument prefixed to each chapter), pointed to such histories in the Bible as may help to illustrate some passages; and shewn how the dispute is managed, till God himself determine it.

But there are two things of which I think myself bound to give a larger account, to avoid the imputation of such novelty as may be justly censured. The one is, that I have interpreted those three known verses in the nineteenth chapter, 25—27. not of Job's resurrection from the dead at the last day, but of his restoration to a happy estate in this world; after he had been so sorely afflicted. There are many, of no mean esteem (Mr. Calvin amongst the rest), who have done so before me; in following whom, I do not forsake the sense of the ancient doctors. For though I take that to be the literal sense of the words, yet I doubt not there is another more secret and hidden, which lies covered under them; and that we ought to look upon Job's restoration (and so I have always explained it) as a notable type of the future resurrection of our bodies out of the grave. And accordingly our church hath very fitly applied the words (as many of the fathers do) to this purpose, in the office for the burial of the dead.

St. Jerome (or the author of the Commentaries upon Job under his name) is my guide in this business; who saith no more than this, that Job, in these words, "resurrectionem futuram prophetat in Spiritu," *prophesieth in the Spirit the future resurrection.* Now the words of the prophets had commonly an immediate respect to something which was then doing, or shortly to be done, besides that sense which the Holy Ghost directed them to signify in the latter days. And so had these words of Job, of which that father, indeed, gives us only the mystical sense; but he doth so in many other places of that book, where it is certain and acknowledged the holy man had another meaning, in which he was more nearly concerned. I shall refer the reader only to one place in the first chapter; where he saith, that Job did "ferre typum Christi;" (and so he saith in his preface, "Figuram Christi portavit;" and in his conclusion, xlii. 14. "Figuram manifeste habuit salvatoris:") and therefore expounds those words, ver. 20, 21. in this manner: "He fell on the ground when he emptied himself of the form of God, to take on him the form of a servant; and came naked out of his mother's womb, being not aspersed with the least spot of original sin." He that will may read what follows, and see how he only sets down a mystical sense, when it is certain another (upon which that is built) is first intended. And so we are to take his exposition upon these words, which "secundum mysticos intellectus," (as he speaks, xxxviii. 16.) *according to the hidden inter-*

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pretations, are to be understood of the resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Christ; but relate, in the first place, to Job's resurrection out of that miserable condition wherein he lay, which was a figure of the other. "They, therefore, who interpret these words otherways, (to speak with that father in his commentaries upon Ezekiel, xxxvii. 1, &c.) ought not to make me ill thought of, as if, by expounding them in the literal sense only, I took away a proof of the resurrection from the dead. For I know there are far stronger testimonies (of which there can be no doubt nor dispute) to be found for the confirmation of that truth. On those let us rely, on the plain words of Him who is the truth (and of whom Job was but a figure), which are abundantly sufficient to support our faith; and let none imagine that we *give occasion to heretics* (as he speaks presently after) *if we deny these words to be meant of the general resurrection.*"

The second thing of which I am to give an account is, that I have not expounded *behemoth* to signify the *elephant,* nor *leviathan* to signify the *whale;* because many of their characters do not agree to them; but every one of them to the description which the writers of natural history have given of two other creatures. And therefore I have herein followed the guidance of that excellent critic Bochartus, who takes the former for the *river-horse,* and the latter for the *crocodile;* as I have expressed it in the margin, but put neither of them in the text: for I leave every one, as our translators have done, to apply the words to any other creatures, if they can find any besides those now mentioned, which have all the qualities that are here ascribed to them.

I have adventured also in the beginning to add a few words, as the manner of paraphrasts is, to give an account of the time when Job lived, which seems to have been before the children of Israel came out of Egypt. For though there be plain mention of the drowning of the old world, and the burning of Sodom, in this book, yet there is no allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh, and other miraculous works which attended their deliverance. Nor is there any notice taken of that revelation of God's will to Moses, when Elihu reckons up those ways whereby God was wont to discover himself to men. Such-like reasons moved Origen to say, (lib. i. contra Celsum, p. 305.) that Job was ἀρχαιότερος καὶ Μωυσέως αὐτοῦ, *more ancient than even Moses himself;* and Eusebius (lib. i. Demonstr. Evangel. cap. 6.) to pronounce that he was before Moses two whole ages. Which is conformable to the opinion of many of the Hebrew writers, who, as Mr. Selden observes, (lib. vii. de Jure Nat. &c. cap. 11.) think Job lived in the days of Isaac and Jacob. The judgment of other eastern people is not much different from this, as may be seen in Hottinger's Smegma Orientale, (p. 381. 452, 453.)

And therefore one use we may make of this book is, to inform ourselves what are the true natural dictates of human reason, which teaches greater chastity than many Christians are now willing to observe; strict justice, both private and public; compassionate charity to those who are in need; together with a pious care to please God, and to worship and confide in him alone; as we may learn here better than from any other book in the world. For in the twenty-first chapter, Job gives such a character of his life, with respect to all these, as declares both that there is a law written in our hearts, and what instructions it gives us, if we will attend to it. There is not the least syllable that we read concerning his being circumcised, or observing the sabbath, or such-like parts of the Mosaical discipline, which assures us he was neither a natural Israelite, nor a proselyte, as St. Austin speaks; (lib. xviii. cap. 47. de Civit. Dei.) and yet he found such a rule of life in himself, that, by the assistance of the Divine grace, he ordered, not only his outward actions, but the inward motions of his mind, after such a manner, as is "not unsuitable to the evangelical doctrine of our Saviour." They are the words of Eusebius in the place forenamed; where he doth not fear to add, that the "word of Christ hath published to all nations that most ancient manner of godliness which was among the first fathers; so that the new covenant is no other than that old godly polity which was before the times of Moses:" I may add, before the time that Abraham was circumcised; when, as St. Chrysostom speaks very significantly, (upon Rom. ii. 14.) ἀρκεῖ ἀντὶ τοῦ νόμου τὸ συνειδὸς καὶ λογισμὸς, *their conscience and the use of reason sufficed instead of the law.*

The Hebrew books, indeed, are full of discourses concerning certain precepts, which all mankind after the flood observed, but cannot all of them be deduced from the principles of reason. They call them the seven precepts of the sons of Noah; who delivered them, they say, to all his children, by whom the world was peopled; and therefore the Israelites ever exacted the observance of them from all those gentiles whom they admitted as proselytes at large to their religion. Two of these precepts concerned their duty towards the blessed Creator; the next four respected their duty towards their neighbours; the last forbade cruelty towards other creatures. They are reckoned up commonly in this order: 1. Concerning strange worship, or idolatry. 2. About blaspheming the name of God. 3. About murder. 4. About the uncovering of nakedness, or all filthy mixtures. 5. About theft and rapine. 6. About judicatures and civil government; to make the other precepts more carefully observed. 7. About not eating of any flesh which is cut off from any animal alive. The authors that treat of these are innumerable: among whom I shall only mention Maimonides, who thus delivers his opinion of them in his treatise of Kings, chap. ix.—

"Adam, the first man, received commands about six things (which are those first abovementioned); from whence it is, that the mind of man inclines more pronely to them, than to the rest of the commands which we have received from our master Moses. Besides these, it is manifest, Noah received another, according to what we read Gen. ix. 4. 'Flesh with the life thereof you shall not eat.' And thus things stood throughout the whole world until the days of Abraham; to whom there was superadded the precept of circumcision."

But, as there is not the least sign that circumcision was part of Job's religion, so there is no footstep at all remaining of his observance of the last of those seven precepts, which they say all the sons of Noah, who were pious, carefully obeyed. A great man of our own nation (Mr. Selden, lib. *ult.* de Jure Naturali, &c. cap. 2.) hath sifted this business with as much diligence as is possible; but after all his search, he is fain to stop at those first six precepts delivered to Adam. For though this general character be

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given of Job in the beginning of the book, that he was a perfect, or simple and upright, man, fearing God, and eschewing evil; and in the thirty-first chapter, and other places, there are particular instances given of his abhorring strange worship, (ver. 26.) blasphemy, (i. 5.) murder, (xxxi. 29. 31.) adultery, and other filthiness, (ver. 1. 9.) theft, rapine, and deceit; (ver. 5—7.) for the punishment of which he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11. 28.) and was himself one of the chief: (xxix. 11.) yet here is not so much as one word to be found, that I can discern, concerning the seventh precept; whether we understand thereby eating flesh with the blood in it; or, which is more likely, (because other nations, that were not Jews, might lawfully eat that which died of itself, Deut. xiv. 21.) eating that which was cut alive from any living creature.

Which makes me think that it was not so generally known as the Jews now pretend; till the memory of it was revived by Moses, among whose ancestors the tradition was more carefully preserved than in other nations. For Job and such-like pious persons, seem to have been governed by those precepts only which the first man received; that is, the dictates of natural reason. According to those words of Tertullian, in his book against the Jews: where he contends, (chap. 2.) that "before the law of Moses, written in tables of stone, there was a law not written, which was naturally understood, and observed by the fathers:" which he elsewhere calls the "common law, which we meet withal *in publico mundi, in the streets and highways of the world,* in the natural tables;" which mankind having broken, our Saviour came to repair and renew; abrogating the law of Moses, in which the Jews had placed too much confidence, while they neglected these natural precepts. Or rather, he hath not only engaged us by his holy sacraments to observe those more strictly, but raised them also to a greater height of purity; according to that of St. Chrysostom in his book of virginity: "We are to shew greater virtue, because now there is an abundant grace poured out; and great is the gift of the coming of Christ."

But the principal benefit (to omit the naming of many other whereby I might recommend this work) which I hope pious souls, especially the afflicted, will reap by this book, is, to be persuaded thereby, that all things are ordered and disposed by almighty God; without whose command or permission, neither good angels, nor the devil, nor men, nor any other creature, can do any thing. And that, as his power is infinite, so is his wisdom and goodness; which is able to bring good out of evil. And therefore we ought not to complain of him in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us; but rather cheerfully submit ourselves to his blessed will; which never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it. To that issue God himself at last brings all the dispute between Job and his friends; representing his works throughout the world to be so wonderful and unaccountable, that it is fit for us to acknowledge our ignorance, but never accuse his providence: if we cannot see the cause why he sends any affliction, or continues it long upon us; instead of murmuring and complaining, in such a case, this book effectually teaches us to resign ourselves absolutely to him; silently to adore and reverence the unsearchable depth of his wise counsels; contentedly to bear what he inflicts upon us; still to assert his righteousness, in the midst of the calamities which befal the good, and in the most prosperous successes of the wicked; and steadfastly to believe that all at last shall turn to our advantage, if, like his servant Job, we persevere in faith, and hope, and patience.

To which this book gives so high an encouragement, and contains such powerful comforts for the afflicted; that the old tradition is, Moses could not find any thing like it for the support and satisfaction of the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage; and therefore took the pains to translate it into their language, out of the Syriac, wherein it was first written. Thus he who writes the commentaries upon this book under the name of Origen, tells us, "That he found 'in antiquorum dictis,' *in the sayings of the ancients,* that when the great Moses was sent by God into Egypt, and beheld the affliction of the children of Israel to be so grievous, that nothing he could say was able to comfort them in that lamentable condition; he declared to them the terrible sufferings of Job, with his happy deliverance; and setting them down in writing also, gave this book to that distressed people. That reading these things in their several tribes and families, and hearing how sorely this blessed man suffered, they might comfort and exhort one another, to endure with patience and thanksgiving the evils which encompassed them; and hearing withal how bountifully God rewarded Job for his patience, they might hope for deliverance, and expect the benefit of a blessed reward of their labours.

"Be ye constant, O children of Israel (said Moses, with a pleasing countenance, when he delivered this book into their hands), do not faint in your minds, O ye posterity of Abraham; but suffer grief, and bear these evils patiently, as that man in the land of Uz did, whose name was Job: who, though he was a righteous and faithful person, in whom was no fault, yet suffered the sorest torments by the malice of the devil; as you do now most unjustly from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They treat you indeed very basely, and have enslaved you, without any fault of yours, &c. But do not despair of a better condition; you shall be delivered, as Job was, and have a reward of your tribulations, like that which God gave to him."

There follows a great deal more to the same purpose in that writer, which I shall not transcribe. But only add, that the church of Christ, as he observes, was wont, after this example, to read this passion of Job publicly in all their assemblies; upon holy-days (when they commemorated the martyrs), and upon fasting days, and days of abstinence; and upon the days of our Saviour's passion: of which they thought they saw a figure in the sufferings of Job; as of our Saviour's resurrection and exaltation, in Job's wonderful recovery and advancement to a greater height of prosperity. And, as they read this history in the church publicly; so, when they went to visit any one privately that was in grief, mourning, or sorrow, they read a lesson of the patience of Job for their comfort or support under their troubles; and to take away the distress and anguish of their heart.

I pray God it may have that effect upon all afflicted persons, who shall read it; and that others also, considering the instability of all worldly things (which is here also livelily represented), may use their prosperity with such

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moderation, that they may bear a change of their condition, if it come, with an equal mind. I am sure there is no man, of whatsoever rank, or in whatsoever condition he be, but may learn very much, if he please, from this admirable pattern. Which is the very first that is left us upon record, of a virtuous life, both in prosperity and in adversity, and that not only as a private man, but as a prince: "In whom it is the greater commendation to obey the will of God; because he hath more means and temptations to fulfil his own."

That therefore shall conclude the character of Job; who, when he had no superior to control him, (as you may read chap. xxix. xxxi.) gave such an example of piety and devotion, humility and moderation, chastity and purity, justice and equity, charity and compassion, as few have done in a private condition. This is as admirable, and will be praised as much to all generations, as his generous patience. Which was so much famed in ancient times, that (from a passage, which some editions of the LXX. have added to the conclusion of this book) it went as a common tradition οὐδὲν ἄπιστον ἔχων (as Theophanes speaks), *having nothing incredible in it,* that Job was one of those, who had the honour to rise out of his grave at our Saviour's resurrection; when, as St. Matthew assures us, xxvii. 51. "Many bodies of saints which slept arose, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." (James v. 7. 11.)

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter is a plain narration of the flourishing condition wherein Job lived, before the envy and malice of the devil brought upon him the sorest calamities; which are particularly described, with the occasion of them, and his admirable constancy under them; whereby he became as eminent an example of patience in adversity, as he had been of piety and all manner of virtue in his prosperity.

Ver. 1. *THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*] In the time of the ancient patriarchs, before the giving of the law of Moses, there lived in Arabia a person of great eminence, whose name was Job: a man not more illustrious for his birth or place, than for the height of his virtue, which appeared in a most unblamable life, void of all hypocrisy, both in his piety towards God, and in his dealings with men, and all other ways.

Ver. 2. *And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.*] Whom God therefore had so wonderfully blessed, that his outward prosperity was equal to the perfections of his mind. For, first, he had given him the sweet fruits of marriage, in a numerous issue of seven sons and three daughters:

Ver. 3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*] And then enriched him abundantly with the wealth of that country; which consisted in seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, as many she-asses; with such a very great tillage, and so many servants, that in those eastern parts he had neither superior nor equal.

Ver. 4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them.*] And together with all this happiness, he had the pleasure to see his children live in love and unity. For it was the custom of his sons to meet at each other's houses, and to make a feast every one upon his birth-day: (iii. 1.) and he whose turn it was to treat the rest, always invited their three sisters to come and be merry with them.

Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*] This feast was wont to last seven days; at the end of which their good father never failed to send a messenger to them, to call upon them to prepare themselves, by fasting and prayer, for the sacrifice he meant to offer for them: and when they were assembled, he rose up early in the morning (the fittest time for devotion), and prayed to God, by offering burnt-offerings for every one of them, because he was afraid they might have done or spoken something that was profane, and misbecoming their religion, when their minds, loosened by mirth, were less upon their guard. And thus he did constantly after every feast.

Ver. 6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*] But this great piety was not sufficient to preserve him from false accusations. For as Job set a time for his children to examine themselves, so there are certain seasons when the angels come and stand in the Divine presence, to give an account of their ministry, and to receive commands from God, the Judge and Governor of the world: and Satan, that subtle adversary of mankind, came one day, and thrust in himself among them.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*] And the Lord (to make him sensible he was not an absolute prince, but his subject) called to him, and demanded an account of him, where he had been, and from whence he came? To which he gave an answer, which expressed, as the great restlessness of his mind, and his unwearied diligence, so the limitation of his power, which extends only to this lower world; for he told him, he came from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*] Then the Lord said to him again; After all thy inquisitiveness and busy search, thou hast nothing to object against the integrity of my servant Job; a man that excels in piety and justice, and all other virtues, which he practises exactly and sincerely.

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Ver. 9. *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*] Yes, said Satan; he serves himself rather than thee: it is not thy pleasure which he regards, but his own profit.

Ver. 10. *Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*] Hast thou not paid him well for his pains? and so environed him and his family, and all belonging to him in every place, that no harm can come to them? Whereby all his business prospers, and his flocks and his herds are so increased, that the country can scarce hold them.

Ver. 11. *But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*] But I am confident, if thou wilt but employ that power to plague him, which hath so long preserved him, he will not only in his heart, but openly, deny thy providence.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*] Then the Lord (who was willing to prove the virtue of his servant in an afflicted estate, as he had done in a prosperous) withdrew the protection he had given him, and granted Satan a commission to dispose of all belonging to Job according as he pleased; excepting only his person, which he commanded him not to touch. This was joyful news to that malicious Spirit, who went immediately to do what he had long desired.

Ver. 13. *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.*] And within a short time found an opportunity to try the constancy of Job, by doing him all the mischief possible, in one and the same day: which was the birth-day of his eldest son, when all his children (far from fearing any evil) were met, according to their custom, at his house, to feast and rejoice together.

Ver. 14. *And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them.*] Then it was that Satan put in execution what he had designed; and first of all stirred up a thievish sort of people in Arabia, to fall upon that part of his land which was next to them. Of which tidings were presently brought to Job by a messenger, saying,

Ver. 15. *And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*] As the oxen were at plough, and the asses in a pasture hard by them, the Sabeans made an inroad into thy country, and carried them all away; having slain, by an unexpected assault, all those who should have preserved them, except myself alone, who made an escape to acquaint thee with it.

Ver. 16. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*] He had not quite delivered his message before another of his servants arrived (as evils seldom come single), to tell him that there had been a very great lightning in those parts, where his sheep were feeding, which had consumed both them and the shepherds, and left none surviving, but himself alone, to give him notice of this disaster.

Ver. 17. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*] He had not finished his narration before another messenger was at the door, saying, Our neighbours the Chaldeans, seeking for booty, divided themselves into three parties, who set upon us all at once; and they have carried away the camels, and killed all the servants that looked after them, except myself, who made a shift to save myself by flight to bring the news of this invasion.

Ver. 18. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.*] Before he had concluded, came in another, the most doleful messenger of all, saying, Thy children, as thou knowest, were feasting with their elder brother:

Ver. 19. *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*] And, behold, on a sudden there arose a violent wind, which coming from the desert, and whirling about the house, took away the four corners of it, and buried them all in its ruins; and there is not one of the guests escaped, that I know of, but only myself, to be the messenger of this great calamity.

Ver. 20. *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.*] Then Job (who had heard all the rest without disturbance) was overcome with grief at this last word, and laying aside all other thoughts, gave up himself to the most lamentable sorrow: for he rent his upper garment, cut off the hair of his head, and threw himself upon the ground. Where he deceived the devil's expectation; for he most reverently adored, as became his piety, the Divine Majesty, and submitted himself to his will, saying,

Ver. 21. *And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*] I am but what I was at first, and what I must have been again at last; and he that hath stripped me of all before I die, hath taken away nothing but what he gave. Let him therefore be praised, who is the Donor of all good things, and the Disposer of all events.

Ver. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*] This was the worst word that he spake, when all these evils came upon him so unexpectedly, and so thick together: all the rest was like this; and nothing dropped from his mouth which in the least accused or questioned the providence of God.

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

The first part of this chapter is a continuation of the narration, which was begun in the foregoing, of the calamities which befel this good man; whom God suffered the devil to afflict in his body, as he had already done in his goods and children. And then follows a farther testimony of his constancy, notwithstanding his wife's angry and pro-

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fane accusation of the Divine Providence: though, it is true, he was so much dejected to see himself reduced to this extremity of misery, that neither he, nor his friends that came to visit him, were able for several days to speak a word.

Ver. 1. *AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.*] After these things the angels going again to attend the pleasure of the Divine Majesty, and to give an account of their several charges, Satan also openly appeared among them, and presented himself as ready and desirous to be examined about his management.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*] But not daring to speak before he was called, he waited till the Divine Majesty asked where he had been, and what he had done. To which he answered, as he had done before, that he had not lost his time, but had fetched a circuit round about the earth, to find opportunity for the exercise of his power.

Ver. 3. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*] Well then, said the Lord, art not thou convinced how true a character I gave of my servant Job, and how much thou hast calumniated him? for he still resolutely continues as perfectly virtuous as he was in his prosperity, though I have consented to these miserable calamities which he suffers undeservedly.

Ver. 4. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin; and all that a man hath will he give for his life.*] To which Satan answered again and said, that his constancy was not so wonderful, since a man hath reason to think himself rich who is in health. Who is there that will not give another's skin to save his own; nay, part with his children, as well as his goods, to save his life?

Ver. 5. *But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*] But enlarge now my commission a little farther, and let me afflict his body, so that it touch him to the very quick, and he will openly renounce thee, and deny thy providence.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*] To which the Divine Majesty (knowing the fidelity of Job, which hereby would become more illustrious) was pleased to yield; and said, Behold, I give thee the same power over his person which thou hadst over his family and goods: inflict what diseases thou wilt upon him, so they do not kill him.

Ver. 7. *So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore biles, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*] No sooner had Satan obtained this new grant, but, withdrawing himself from the presence of the Divine Majesty, he went to pursue his mischievous desires; and smote Job from top to toe with a fiery ulcer, whose sharp humour was extreme grievous and painful, and pricked him (according to his wish) to the very bone.

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*] The filthiness of the disease also increased that sorrow and heaviness which before had seized on him, and made him sit down in the ashes; where he laid hold on what came next to hand, a piece of a broken pot, to wipe away the foul matter which issued out of his biles.

Ver. 9. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*] And it was a farther addition to his grief, to hear his dear consort (whom the Divine Goodness he thought had still left to help him to bear his affliction) utter this profane speech, What a folly is it still to persist in the service of God, when all thou gettest by it is to give him thanks and perish.

Ver. 10. *But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*] These words struck him to the very heart: but instead of being angry with God, he only severely reproved her, telling her that she talked like one of the wicked women; and then piously represented to her, that we ought to take nothing ill which comes from the hand of God (as all evil things do as well as good), and the more good we have received from him, the less reason we have to complain when we suffer any evil. No discourse but such as this was heard to come from his mouth.

Ver. 11. *Now, when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every man from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.*] Now there dwelt in the neighbouring provinces three great men, with whom Job had long maintained a particular friendship, who, hearing the sad tidings of his sufferings, came every one from his country to visit him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; who all three met at his house on the same day, according to an appointment they had made, to come and condole with him, and comfort him.

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.*] But as soon as ever they entered into the place where he lay, they were surprised with so miserable a spectacle of deformity, that they shrieked aloud, as men affrighted, and burst out into tears, and rent their garments, and threw dust into the air, which, falling on their heads, expressed the confusion they were in, to find him so covered over with ulcers that they could not know him.

Ver. 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights; and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*] And when they approached nearer him, they only sat down upon the earth, in the same mournful posture wherein they found him, but were not able (so much were they astonished) for seven days and nights to say one word of the business about which they were come to him. And indeed his grief was so exceedingly great, that they did not well know what to say, till time, which alters all things, had assuaged a little both his grief and theirs.

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CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

Here begin the discourses which Job and his friends had about his affliction; which are all represented, by the author of this book, poetically; not as hitherto, in a plain simple narration, but in most elegant verse. And being overcharged with grief (without the least word of comfort from his friends), he that had for some time borne the weight of his afflictions with an admirable constancy, could not contain himself any longer, but bursts out (to such a degree was the anguish of his spirit increased) into the most passionate complaints of the miseries of human life. The consideration of which made him prefer death much before it, and wish that either he had never come into the world, or gone presently out of it again, or at least might now forthwith be dismissed.

Ver. 1. *AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.*] And at the end of seven days Job himself began by complaints to give some vent to his grief, which had stupified him thus long: but he burst out into such bitter lamentations, that he wished a thousand times he had never been born.

Ver. 2. *And Job spake, and said.*] That which he said was to this effect:

Ver. 3. *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.*] Let the day and the night of my birth be never more mentioned, but be quite forgotten, as if it had never been.

Ver. 4. *Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.*] Let that day be turned into night, and not be counted among the days: let the sun then withdraw its light, and never shine upon it.

Ver. 5. *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.*] Let the most dismal darkness and the thickest clouds wholly possess it, and render it terrible to men.

Ver. 6. *As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.*] And let the night be of the same sort, and both of them quite blotted out of the calendar.

Ver. 7. *Lo, let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein.*] Let nobody meet together on that night, to feast or make merry.

Ver. 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.*] Let it be as the day wherein men bewail the greatest misfortune, or the time wherein they see the most dreadful apparition.

Ver. 9. *Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.*] Let there not so much as a star appear in that night, nor so much light as we see at peep of day.

Ver. 10. *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*] Because it did not bury me in my mother's womb, and thereby secure me from all these miseries.

Ver. 11. *Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?*] What a misfortune was it, that I did not die before I was born, or at least as soon as I came into the world.

Ver. 12. *Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?*] That they who received me from the womb did not let me fall on the ground, or my nurse refuse to give me suck.

Ver. 13. *For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest.*] Then should I have felt none of these miseries which I now endure, but lain quiet and undisturbed.

Ver. 14. *With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves.*] Equal to kings and the greatest persons, who lie alone in the tombs which they built themselves.

Ver. 15. *Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver.*] Having gold and silver in abundance, whereof now they are bereaved.

Ver. 16. *Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.*] Or like an abortive, which was never numbered among men.

Ver. 17. *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*] There are none can hurt us in the grave, though they be never so malicious, nor shall we toil any more when we come thither.

Ver. 18. *There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.*] The captives, and they who are condemned to hard servitude, take no pains there, and do not dread the voice of the exactor of their labours.

Ver. 19. *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.*] There none are greater than other; but the servant in that place is as free as his master.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul.*] Is it not strange, that a man should be forced to live when he hath no mind to it?

Ver. 21. *Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures.*] But wishes for death though in vain, and seeks it more eagerly than the greatest riches?

Ver. 22. *Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave?*] Leaping for joy when he can meet with his grave, as far more welcome to him than a mine of silver?

Ver. 23. *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?*] Not knowing which way to turn himself, but only thither?

Ver. 24. *For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.*] This is my condition, whose meat merely sustains a miserable life, which is all sighs and sobs, as loud as the roarings of the lion.

Ver. 25. *For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.*] For the very thing which I dreaded is fallen upon me, notwithstanding all my care to prevent it.

Ver. 26. *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.*] I did not confide in my riches, nor in the least lull myself in security, (chap. i. 5.) and yet that did not preserve me from being miserable.

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

Eliphaz, incensed at this complaint of Job, instead of condoling with him, and pitying the miseries which had put

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him into this agony, and applying fitting lenitives to his anguish, bluntly rebukes him for not following the good advice that he used to give to others in their adversity; and tells him he had reason to suspect his piety, because the innocent were not wont to suffer such things, but only wicked oppressors, whom, though never so mighty, God had always humbled. Witness the Horims, who dwelt in Seir, (Deut. ii. 12.) whom the ancestors of Eliphaz (Gen. xxxvi. 11.) had overcome, though they were as fierce as lions. To those beasts of prey, of all sorts, he compares the tyrants whom he speaks of in this chapter, ver. 10, 11. intending, it is likely, to remember him also of the destruction of the Emims by the children of Moab, (Deut. ii. 10, 11.) and of the Zamzummims, (ver. 20, 21.) who were rooted out by the children of Ammon, as the Horims by the children of Esau: from whose grandchild Eliphaz seems to have been descended, and called by the name of the eldest son of Esau. He tells Job also of a vision he had to confirm the same truth, that man's wickedness is the cause of his destruction.

Ver. 1. *THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said.*] Then Eliphaz (one of his most ancient friends, descended from Teman) replied to him and said;

Ver. 2. *If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?*] We must either still keep silence, or speak what will not please thee. But truth sure is more to be regarded than friendship; and therefore I must remember thee.

Ver. 3. *Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.*] That thou, it is well known, hast given good counsel unto others (and perhaps reproved their impatience); thou hast encouraged those who were dispirited.

Ver. 4. *Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.*] And by thy discourse hast supported those whose hearts were ready to sink, and settled those who trembled under their burden.

Ver. 5. *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*] And now that thou art fallen into the same condition, thou canst not practise thy own lessons; but faintest, and art struck with consternation.

Ver. 6. *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*] Is not this the time to exercise thy piety (so much famed), thy confidence in God, thy hope, thine integrity?

Ver. 7. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*] Consult thine own observation, and tell me when thou ever sawest a righteous man forsaken by God.

Ver. 8. *Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*] Quite contrary, I have seen the wicked reaping the fruit of their doings.

Ver. 9. *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*] God blasts and consumes them, as the nipping wind, or the fire, doth the corn in the field.

Ver. 10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.*] Though they be as fierce as the lions and as strong, their power is broken.

Ver. 11. *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*] The greatest tyrants and their posterity, after they have long enjoyed their power, are deprived of all their riches gotten by oppression, and come to nothing.

Ver. 12. *Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.*] If these observations be not sufficient to convince thee, hear what God himself secretly whispered to me.

Ver. 13. *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.*] As I was ruminating one night, when all were asleep, of some visions which I had had,

Ver. 14. *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*] I was on a sudden seized with such a fear, that it made every joint of my body tremble.

Ver. 15. *Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up.*] Whereupon I saw a spirit pass by me, which made mine hair stand on end.

Ver. 16. *It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying.*] I am not able to describe what it was like; for though it stood still, and I saw an image of something, yet I can only tell what I heard in a still voice, saying,

Ver. 17. *Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*] Can any one think that a miserable man is more righteous than God his judge? or that it is possible for any body to be more unreprovable than he that made him?

Ver. 18. *Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.*] The heavenly ministers themselves may fail; for they are not perfectly wise, though they have no flesh and blood as we have.

Ver. 19. *How much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?*] How can we then pretend to perfection, who dwell in bodies of dirt; which stand upon no firm foundation, but are as subject to be destroyed as a garment to be fretted with moths?

Ver. 20. *They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever, without any regarding it.*] We see continual examples of those that are cut off: they are quite taken away when nobody thinks of it.

Ver. 21. *Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.*] Though their dignities be never so great, and their posterity never so numerous, all go away with them, and they die like so many beasts, who have no understanding of their latter end.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

Eliphaz still prosecutes the very same argument; endeavouring to confirm it from the opinion and observation of other men, as well as from his own. And thereupon exhorts him to repentance, as the surest way to find mercy with God; and to be not only restored to his former prosperity, but to be preserved hereafter from the incursions of savage people, or of wild beasts, and

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from all the rest of the disasters which had befallen him. Of this he bids him, in the conclusion, be assured; for it was a point he had studied.

Ver. 1. *CALL now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?*] If thou dost not believe me, thou mayest inquire of others. There is no good man but is of this opinion: and if an angel should appear to thee (as there did to me), thou wouldest have no other information but this:

Ver. 2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy stayeth the silly one.*] That God in his anger and indignation destroys the wicked, and him that errs from his precepts.

Ver. 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*] This is so certain, that I have predicted his downfall, when he seemed most firmly settled in his prosperity.

Ver. 4. *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.*] His children also fell with him; justice took hold of them, and would not let them escape.

Ver. 5. *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.*] The hungry soldier devoured their harvest, there was no fence could secure it; but the rest of their riches became a prey to the robber.

Ver. 6. *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.*] For we are not to ascribe the trouble and misery of mankind merely to earthly causes, which are but the instruments of God's justice.

Ver. 7. *Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*] Who hath made it as natural to man to suffer (having offended him), as it is for the sparks to fly upward.

Ver. 8. *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.*] Wherefore, if I were in thy case, I would humbly address myself to God, and desire him to order all things as he pleases.

Ver. 9. *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.*] For he is the author of all those wonderful things, whose causes we can no more find out than we can count their number.

Ver. 10. *Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.*] Of the rain, for instance, in its season; and of the springs which run in the fields:

Ver. 11. *To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.*] Whereby men of low condition are enriched and grow great; as the plants and corn shoot out of the earth, after they are moistened with showers.

Ver. 12. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*] And, on the contrary, he defeats the craftiest designs of subtle men to raise themselves; and it is not in their power to effect that which they have most wisely contrived.

Ver. 13. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*] Nay, they produce that which they studied to avoid; and when they think themselves sure, make too much haste to their ruin.

Ver. 14. *They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon day as in the night.*] They trip in the plainest way, and see not their danger, when it is visible to every body but themselves.

Ver. 15. *But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*] Whereby many a helpless man is delivered, both from the open force, and from the treacherous flatteries or calumnies of those that are too strong for them.

Ver. 16. *So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*] And therefore he that is oppressed should not despair, nor should the oppressors boast themselves; for there is hope that God will save the one to the utter destruction of the other.

Ver. 17. *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.*] Behold then, how little reason there is to complain of God's chastisements, which if thou dost not refuse he is able to turn to thy good.

Ver. 18. *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*] For he doth not merely wound, but, like a wise chirurgeon, by that very means he cures and heals.

Ver. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*] Thy troubles cannot be so many, but, if thou submissively accept them, he will free thee from them.

Ver. 20. *In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword.*] He will feed thee in the best barren years, and defend thee in the day of battle.

Ver. 21. *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.*] False accusers shall not be able to hurt thee; and when whole countries are depopulated, thou shalt be secure.

Ver. 22. *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh; neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*] When nothing is to be seen but wild beasts, whom famine forces from their dens, thou shalt be cheerful and undaunted.

Ver. 23. *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*] For the stony parts of the country shall not fail to bring forth its fruits plentifully; and the beasts of the field shall not devour them.

Ver. 24. *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.*] Wheresoever thou pitchest thy tent, thou shalt find it in safety: and when thou takest an account of thine estate, all things shall answer thine expectation.

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*] Thou shalt find thy posterity also very great and numerous, like the grass; though now thou art as bare as the earth in winter.

Ver. 26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.*] Thou shalt not die a violent and untimely death; but be carried to thy grave as corn is to the barn when it is full ripe and fit to be gathered.

Ver. 27. *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*] Doubt not of this, for we have thoroughly considered it, and find it so: receive it therefore, and keep it in memory.

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CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

Job, not at all convinced by these discourses, justifies the complaint he had made, (chap. iii.) which Eliphaz had now accused; maintaining that his grief was not equal to the cause of it. And therefore he renews his wishes of death: at which, though they might wonder who felt nothing to make them weary of life, yet he had reason, he shews, for what he did; and one more than before, which was their unkindness: who pretended to be friends; but, by this rude reproof of him at the very first, without so much as one compassionate word, or the least syllable of consolation, shewed how little sympathy they had with him in his sufferings. These things he desires them to consider, and weigh the cause of his complaint a little better, before they passed any farther judgment on it.

Ver. 1. *BUT Job answered and said.*] Here Job replied to Eliphaz, and spake in these terms to him,

Ver. 2. *Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*] Would to God some more equal person than you would lay my complaint and my sufferings one against the other, and judge sincerely which is the heaviest!

Ver. 3. *For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.*] He would soon find, that the sand of the sea is not so heavy as my misery; and that I am not able to complain enough.

Ver. 4. *For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.*] The Almighty himself hath given me such a wound, that I am dispirited: for nothing but dreadful spectacles present themselves ready armed against me.

Ver. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?*] It is easy for you who feel no pain nor want to forbear complaints; which is no more than the very ass and other brute creatures do.

Ver. 6. *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*] But may not he who eats insipid things call for a little salt to make them go down better? (How much more then may we call for something to qualify that which is bitter?)

Ver. 7. *The things which my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.*] As I do now, who have nothing afforded me for my support, but such discourses as yours, which my very soul loathes.

Ver. 8. *Oh that I might have my request! and that God would grant me the thing that I long for.*] I cannot but cry unto God, and beseech him to grant me my heart's desire.

Ver. 9. *Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!*] Which is, that he would be pleased not to let me languish in this miserable condition, but with one stroke more quite cut me off.

Ver. 10. *Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.*] It would be a great comfort to me to hope for this, and would strengthen me to endure the severest pains: for I would receive the sentence of death with acclamations of praise, if God would pronounce it against me.

Ver. 11. *What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?*] For I have not strength enough to endure any longer, nor any hope of better days in the conclusion, which should make me willing to have my life prolonged.

Ver. 12. *Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?*] God hath not made me insensible, and therefore do not wonder that I desire to be released from the sharpest pains.

Ver. 13. *Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?*] Do not think my reason hath forsaken me, and that I do not understand myself.

Ver. 14. *To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.*] Were it so, a friend should shew me the more pity; as you would do, but that you fear not God, nor remember that he can afflict you as he doth me.

Ver. 15. *My brethren have dwelt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away.*] My dearest friends prove as deceitful as the torrents, which make a great noise, and run with a violent stream.

Ver. 16. *Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid.*] When the melted ice and snow fall thick into them.

Ver. 17. *What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.*] They promise water, but in the summer-time are dried up.

Ver. 18. *The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.*] So that you can scarce find any mark of the course wherein they ran, they are so perfectly vanished.

Ver. 19. *The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.*] They that travel into our neighbouring countries expected to quench thirst there, where they had sometime seen so much water.

Ver. 20. *They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.*] But were shamefully disappointed, and blushed to think they should seek relief from such uncertain streams.

Ver. 21. *For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.*] Just such are you, good for nothing; who, seeing my calamity, shrink from me.

Ver. 22. *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?*] And yet I never sent for you, nor do I ask, now you are come, any relief from you.

Ver. 23. *Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?*] I do not expect you should deliver me from these calamities, which, as so many mighty enemies, oppress me.

Ver. 24. *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.*] Do not mistake me, nor think that I despise the assistance of your counsel and advice: no, I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them, if you can better inform me.

Ver. 25. *How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?*] Oh what power is there in truth! but your reprehensions are ineffectual.

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Ver. 26. *Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?*] You only study to shew your eloquence, and in vain use words to drive me to desperation.

Ver. 27. *Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and you dig a pit for your friend.*] You fall upon him who is already depressed, and without defence, and in a barbarous manner devise counsel against your friend.

Ver. 28. *Now therefore be content; look upon me: for it is evident unto you if I lie.*] But let it please you to consider my case a little better, and then judge if I be in the wrong.

Ver. 29. *Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.*] Discuss things over again, I beseech you, and do it fairly. I say, let me have a second hearing, it will but the more shew my innocence.

Ver. 30. *Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?*] Have I said any thing hitherto that is faulty? I do not think my judgment is so corrupted, but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

Job proceeds still in the defence of his complaint, and of his wishes to see an end of so miserable a life; which at the best is full of toil and trouble. And, since his friends had so little consideration of him, he addresses himself to God, and hopes he will not be angry, if he ease his grief by representing to him the dolefulness of his condition, and expostulating a little with him about the continuance of it, and his release from it.

Ver. 1. *IS there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?*] Is not the whole life of miserable man a perpetual conflict with various troubles? And must he not at best undergo much toil, labour, and weariness?

Ver. 2. *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for the reward of his work.*] Why may I not then as passionately wish to see an end of it, as the slave in a hot day gasps for the refreshment of the shade? or the labourer longs for the evening, when he may rest, and be paid for his pains?

Ver. 3. *So I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.*] I am sure my days are no less void of contentment than theirs; and in the night, when men are wont to forget their sorrows, I can do nothing but restlessly increase them.

Ver. 4. *When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.*] I no sooner am laid down but I wish to be up again; and the night seems very tedious while I toss up and down, in unquiet and tormenting thoughts, calling for the morning.

Ver. 5. *My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.*] How can I do otherways, when my body is nothing but ulcers, full of worms, and crusted over with scabs; which have made such clefts in my skin, that I am loathsome to myself?

Ver. 6. *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*] All my happy days are run away in a moment, and there is no hope I should recover them.

Ver. 7. *O remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good.*] O my God, remember how short the most pleasant life is, which when it is gone I cannot live over again.

Ver. 8. *The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.*] I can never return to my friends after I have left them: thou dost but frown upon me, and I vanish quite out of the world.

Ver. 9. *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.*] Just as a cloud dissolves on a sudden before the sun, so doth man sink down into his grave, and appear no more.

Ver. 10. *He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.*] He shall make his habitation there, for hither he cannot return; but others shall take his place, which will no longer acknowledge him the owner of it.

Ver. 11. *Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.*] Suffer me then to speak freely, and to give vent to my grief, by complaining a little of the inexpressible miseries which oppress me.

Ver. 12. *Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?*] Am I like a sea, or a whale (or wild beast), that must be shut up and confined under these insupportable sufferings, and by no means break through them?

Ver. 13. *When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint.*] If death may not come and put an end to them, one would have hoped at least to have found some intermission of them by sleep.

Ver. 14. *Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.*] But then I am haunted with such frightful dreams, and such horrid apparitions.

Ver. 15. *So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.*] That I had much rather die the most violent death, than carry this carcass any longer about with me.

Ver. 16. *I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.*] It is loathsome to me: I would not, if I might, live always in it. Dismiss me, therefore, since I have no pleasure in life, which of itself will end shortly.

Ver. 17. *What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?*] Is mortal man so considerable, that thou shouldest honour him so much as to contend with him, and set thyself against him?

Ver. 18. *And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?*] That thou shouldest send new afflictions on him every morning; nay, try his strength and courage every moment?

Ver. 19. *How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?*] It is time to turn away thy displeasure from me; at least for so short a space, as to give me leave to breathe.

Ver. 20. *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?*] I am not able to

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give thee satisfaction for my offences against thee, O thou Observer of men. But why dost thou not remove me quite out of thy sight, if I be a burden to thee?

Ver. 21. *And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.*] Or else forgive my sin, and so far release me from its punishment, as to let me die; which I shall do presently, and not be found to-morrow to endure these afflictions, if thou dost not still hold me under them.

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The foregoing apologies of Job, it seems, made little impression on his friends: for he had no sooner done, but another of them, called Bildad, continued the dispute, with as little intermission as there was between the messengers that brought him (chap. i.) the sad tidings of his calamities. And it doth not appear by his discourse, that he differed at all in his principles from Eliphaz. For, though he give him very good counsel, yet he still presses this as the sense of all antiquity, (ver. 8.) that God ever prospers the just, and roots out the wicked, be they never so flourishing for a season. And he being descended from Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, (Gen. xxv. 2.) seems to me to have a particular respect, in this appeal to history, unto the records which then remained of God's blessing upon that faithful man's posterity, who hitherto, and long after, continued in his religion; and of the extirpation of those eastern people (neighbours to Job), in whose country they were settled, because of their wickedness.

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Bildad the Shukite, and said.*] When Job had made an end of this discourse, Bildad (another great friend of his, descended from Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah), reprehended him in the same manner as Eliphaz had done, saying;

Ver. 2. *How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*] Why dost thou persist to talk on this fashion, and with such vehemence expostulate with God?

Ver. 3. *Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*] Dost thou imagine the supreme Judge will not do thee right? or that he who needs nothing will swerve from the rules of equity?

Ver. 4. *If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression.*] Is it not now reasonable to think that thy children had highly offended him; for which cause he took a sudden and hasty vengeance on them?

Ver. 5. *If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty.*] And that if thou didst now (instead of complaining) implore his grace and favour with humble supplication;

Ver. 6. *If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*] And wert thyself sincere in heart and upright in thine actions, he would certainly have a regard to thee, and restore thy family to its former splendour.

Ver. 7. *Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*] I am confident, thou art not now so low, but in time he would make thee as high, nay, far more eminent, than thou wast before.

Ver. 8. *For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.*] I do not desire thee to take my word for it; but let those who are gone before us instruct thee, and search diligently into the histories of the most ancient times.

Ver. 9. *(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow).*] (For, alas! we are not old enough to understand much: being able to make but few observations, by reason of the exceeding shortness of our lives.)

Ver. 10. *Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*] They will not fail to inform thee aright; and out of their long experience, and the prudent observations of many ages, justify the truth of my words.

Ver. 11. *Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?*] The rushes and flags we see can shoot up no higher, when they want their mud and moisture.

Ver. 12. *While it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.*] There is no need to stop their growth by cutting them down; for they will wither of themselves, even when they are fresh and green: while smaller herbs, which want not water, continue their beauty.

Ver. 13. *So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.*] Just such is the condition of all those who neglect God (without whose blessing none can flourish): who knows him also that counterfeits piety, and will defeat him of the happiness he expects.

Ver. 14. *Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.*] He may flatter himself with vain hopes, and be so much the more miserable; for the things wherein he trusts are as weak as a spider's web.

Ver. 15. *He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.*] He may fancy his family to be so great and potent that it will support him; but it shall fall as well as himself: he may endeavour to keep it up by strong alliances, but to no purpose.

Ver. 16. *He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.*] Nay, he may seem to all the world, as well as to himself, to be like a flourishing tree, which spreads its branches in a fair garden.

Ver. 17. *His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.*] Whose roots have wreathed themselves thick about the earth, and whose head lifts up itself above the highest edifices.

Ver. 18. *If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.*] But when God blasts him, and plucks him up by the roots, there shall remain no remembrance that such a man ever lived in that place.

Ver. 19. *Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.*] Believe it, the pleasure such men take in their prosperous estate is no better than this; and out of the dust shall others spring up, and flourish in their stead.

Ver. 20. *Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil-doers.*] It is a certain truth, that

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God will not desert the upright, nor will he uphold the wicked.

Ver. 21. *Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.*] Thou thyself (if thou art upright) shalt still be so blessed by him, that thou shalt not be able to contain thy joy within thy heart; but it shall appear in thy countenance, and burst out into joyful songs.

Ver. 22. *They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought.*] They that rejoiced at thy fall shall be perfectly confounded at thy happy restoration, and never recover themselves, but utterly perish.

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT.

Job allows what Bildad had well spoken in the beginning of his speech: and very religiously adores the justice, wisdom, and sovereignty of the Almighty, with whom he protests he had no intention to quarrel or dispute, but only to assert the contrary maxim to that which they maintained, that piety will not secure us from all calamities, which do not ever fall upon those that deserve them. Witness, on one hand, the prosperous estate of wicked princes, ver. 24. (particularly of one great prince, who then somewhere reigned in their neighbouring countries); and, on the other hand, his own infelicity, notwithstanding his known integrity, ver. 25. About this he confesses he was very much unsatisfied; though he knew it was in vain to argue with God about it, nor would his affliction suffer him to do it.

Ver. 1. *THEN Job answered and said.*] When he had done, Job began again, and replied in this manner:

Ver. 2. *I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?*] There need not so many words to prove what thou saidst in the entrance of thy speech; for I know very well that God never perverts judgment, and that frail man cannot justify himself before him.

Ver. 3. *If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.*] If he should go about to answer to a thousand things which may be objected to him, he would hardly clear himself in one.

Ver. 4. *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*] I adore also his wisdom and power as well as his justice; and am sensible that no men can be safe who obstinately oppose him.

Ver. 5. *Which removeth the mountains, and they know not; which overturneth them in his anger.*] Though they were as big and as strong as the mountains, he can hastily overturn them in a moment before they think of it.

Ver. 6. *Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.*] For he is able to remove the whole earth out of its place, and shatter the very foundations of it.

Ver. 7. *Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.*] Nor are the heavens less subject to his power: for neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid them.

Ver. 8. *Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.*] He alone commands the clouds to cover them, and makes the sea swell and lift up its waves.

Ver. 9. *Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.*] All the constellations of heaven obey him in their several seasons: both those which we see, and those in the other hemisphere.

Ver. 10. *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.*] In short, I agree with Eliphaz, (v. 9.) that the wonders he doeth are innumerable, and past my comprehension.

Ver. 11. *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.*] He sets them before my eyes continually, and yet I am not able to understand them.

Ver. 12. *Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?*] If he snatch away any thing suddenly, who can make him restore it, or cause him to give an account why he did it?

Ver. 13. *If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.*] If he will continue his displeasure, there is no remedy; but the proudest undertakers must confess their inability to relieve us.

Ver. 14. *How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?*] What am I then, poor wretch, that I should contend with his anger? or where shall I find out words choice enough to plead with him?

Ver. 15. *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.*] It is not fit for me to open my mouth before him in the justest cause, unless it be to supplicate his favour when he judges me.

Ver. 16. *If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.*] And if I had made supplication, and he had granted my desire, I would not think my prayer had done the business (or believe myself to be out of all danger).

Ver. 17. *For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.*] For I am not conscious of any guilt; and yet you see with what violent blasts he hath shattered me and my family in pieces, and given me one wound after another.

Ver. 18. *He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.*] No sooner was one past, but another immediately followed; which have left me not the least pleasure in life.

Ver. 19. *If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?*] If I stand upon my might, alas! it is not to be named with his: if upon my right; what judge is there above him to appoint us a day of hearing?

Ver. 20. *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*] If I should justify myself, there would be something in my very plea to condemn me: it will render my cause worse to pretend I am innocent.

Ver. 21. *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life.*] Though I were so, yet I would not be mine own judge in the case: I do not value my life so much as to contend about it.

Ver. 22. *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.*] All that I affirm is this, and I persist in that opinion, that he lets the innocent suffer sad things as well as the guilty.

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Ver. 23. *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.*] When a plague comes which kills in a moment, he regards not though it fall on the innocent.

Ver. 24. *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?*] And, on the other side (so false is your discourse), we see the government of the earth given into the hands of a wicked prince, who blinds the eyes of his judges. If you deny this, tell me, where is the man, and what is his name, who administers things uprightly?

Ver. 25. *Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good.*] I myself was in prosperity, but it is fled away swifter than a post; and there is not the least footstep of it remaining.

Ver. 26. *They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.*] The ships that are carried with the most rapid stream, or the hungry eagle in chase of her prey, do not make more haste away.

Ver. 27. *If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself.*] I think sometime with myself, that I will forget the miseries of which I complain, and be more cheerful and courageous:

Ver. 28. *I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.*] But then my grief frights away that resolution; knowing thou wilt not release me, but make me still groan under them.

Ver. 29. *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?*] I am wicked in thine account, and therefore it is to no purpose to vindicate mine innocence.

Ver. 30. *If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean.*] Were I never so pure and clean from all filthiness in heart and life;

Ver. 31. *Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*] Thou wouldest notwithstanding cover me with filthy ulcers, and make my nearest relations abhor to approach me.

Ver. 32. *For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.*] For God is not like me, that we should dispute upon even terms.

Ver. 33. *Neither is there any day's-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*] Nor is there any body above us both to compose our differences and command silence, when either of us exceeds our bounds.

Ver. 34. *Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me.*] As for myself, his rod, which is upon me, keeps me in such awe, that I cannot speak freely.

Ver. 35. *Then would I speak, and not fear him: but it is not so with me.*] Let him remove that, and then I shall utter my mind with less dread: for I am not so bad as you imagine.

CHAP. X.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter the passionate complaints and expostulations with God, from which Job tells us (in the foregoing chapter) he intended hereafter to refrain, break out afresh; and he earnestly desires to know what his guilt is: which God who made him, he was sure, could not but perfectly understand, if there was any, and needed not, for the discovery of it, to expose him to these severe torments. Which, he still is of the opinion, may justify his wishes of never being born, or of dying presently after. Though, those wishes being vain, he acknowledges it is more rational to desire, that God would be pleased to intermit his pain awhile, if he did not think fit quite to remove it.

Ver. 1. *MY soul is weary of my life: I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*] And since life is a burden to me, which can find no ease but only in complaining, I will take that liberty, (for it is in vain to contend against it, ix. 27.) though no words can express my anguish and misery.

Ver. 2. *I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.*] O thou supreme Judge of all, do not pronounce thy final sentence against me, till thou hast first shewn me what the crimes are for which I suffer.

Ver. 3. *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?*] What benefit wilt thou receive by my spoils? or is it agreeable to thee to slight thine own workmanship, and to countenance the reasonings and designs of evil men?

Ver. 4. *Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?*] Dost thou judge of things as men do, who can see no farther than the outside, or are led by their affections?

Ver. 5. *Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days?*] Must thou take time as we do to find out the truth, and understand the bottom of a business?

Ver. 6. *That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?*] Is that the reason thou usest me thus severely, and hast laid me upon a rack, and as it were examinest what I have done amiss?

Ver. 7. *Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver me out of thine hand.*] Surely thou (whose vengeance none can escape) knowest, without the help of such torments, that I am not guilty.

Ver. 8. *Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.*] There is no part of me but was most elaborately made and fashioned by thee (and therefore thou canst not be ignorant of me); though now thou art about to ruin me.

Ver. 9. *Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?*] Need I put thee in mind that I was formed by thee, as the potter works the clay into what shape he pleases, and now thou art crumbling me into pieces again?

Ver. 10. *Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?*] Didst not thou gather all the scattered parts together, and compact them in my mother's womb?

Ver. 11. *Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*] And first cover them with skin, and then with flesh, and at last strengthen them with bones and sinews;

Ver. 12. *Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.*] And in due time bring me into the world, and give me all the comforts of life, and by thy constant care preserve both it and them?

Ver. 13. *And these things hast thou hid in thy heart: I know that this is with thee.*] Thou canst not have forgotten these things; and I am sure that this misery I now endure is not without thy order.

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Ver. 14. *If I sin, then thou markest me; and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.*] I cannot offend thee in the least, but thou (by whom I was thus formed) must needs know and observe it, and I cannot avoid thy punishment for it.

Ver. 15. *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction.*] If I be wicked, I am undone; and if I be righteous, I am so oppressed that I cannot look upon what a lamentable confusion I am in, beholding nothing but misery which way soever I cast mine eyes.

Ver. 16. *For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion; and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.*] For it grows greater and greater, while thou pursuest me as a lion doth his prey; and when I hope there is an end of my troubles, sendest more to fill me with new astonishment and horror.

Ver. 17. *Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.*] Fresh witnesses of thine anger rise up against me: thou multipliest thy plagues upon me so that there is no end, but only a change of my conflicts.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!*] And therefore I cannot but wish, as I did at the first, that my mother's womb had been my grave: happy had it been for me if I had died there, and never come into this miserable world:

Ver. 19. *I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.*] Or that I had died as soon as I was born, and been carried from the womb to the grave;

Ver. 20. *Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little.*] To which I am now very near. May I beg therefore but this one favour, that since thou wilt not quite remove thy hand, thou wilt forbear awhile to strike, and let me breathe and refresh myself a little;

Ver. 21. *Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death.*] Before I depart thither from whence I shall not return (to ask any more favours); be laid, I mean, in my grave, the place of dismal darkness:

Ver. 22. *A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*] Where it is as dark as dark can be; and there is no succession of day and night, as we have here, but one perpetual night.

CHAP. XI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter gives an account of the sense of Zophar about the business in dispute. It is uncertain whence he was descended; but probably he dwelt upon the borders of Idumea, for there we find an ancient city called Naamah, (Josh. xv. 41.) and from thence came to visit Job in his affliction. But instead of joining with him in his prayer for a little respite from his pain (with which Job had concluded his discourse), he calls him an idle talker, and accuses him of irreverence towards God. Concerning whose incomprehensible counsels, and irresistible power, &c. he discourses with great sense, and gives Job exceeding good advice; but still follows the opinion of the other two friends, that he would not have been so miserable if he had not been wicked.

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said.*] Here a third friend of Job's (Zophar of Naamah) began to speak, with no small passion;

Ver. 2. *Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?*] Dost thou think to stop our mouths with abundance of words; and by thy talkativeness to persuade us thou art innocent?

Ver. 3. *Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?*] Must we not confute thy false allegations, but suffer thee to be insolent, because thou art miserable?

Ver. 4. *For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.*] For thou pretendest not to have offended either in word or deed, and that God himself can find no reason to condemn thee.

Ver. 5. *But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee.*] Oh that he would vouchsafe to shew thee thine error, and with his own mouth confute thee!

Ver. 6. *And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*] That he would shew thee the secret reasons of his wise counsels (which far surpass thine) in this affliction; and make thee know that he would be just, if he should punish thy sin more severely.

Ver. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*] Art thou able, after all thy busy inquiries, to give an account of God's judgments, and perfectly comprehend the reasons of his providence?

Ver. 8. *It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*] Thou mayest as well take a measure of the height of heaven, or of the depth of hell.

Ver. 9. *The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*] The earth and the sea, as long and as broad as they are, have their bounds; but that hath none.

Ver. 10. *If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?*] If he seize upon any thing, and shut it up (as a hunter doth his prey in a net), he will gather it, and who shall force him to restore it?

Ver. 11. *For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?*] For he knows vain men (who mind not what they say or do), he sees their most hidden wickedness, and will not he punish it?

Ver. 12. *For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.*] Shall man, void of understanding, take the confidence to dispute with God? man, who is naturally as rude and blockish as a wild ass's colt?

Ver. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.*] If thou art truly wise, cease disputing, and fall to prayer.

Ver. 14. *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.*] If thou art guilty of any sin, banish it quite away, and reform thyself and thy family.

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Ver. 15. *For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear.*] For then shalt thou look cheerfully again, and be perfectly freed from this loathsome condition; yea, thou shalt be settled without any fear of losing thy happiness.

Ver. 16. *Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.*] Which shall be so great, that it shall blot out the remembrance of thy past miseries; or thou shalt think of them as of waters that are run away, and will return no more.

Ver. 17. *And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.*] The rest of thy life shall be more glorious than the sun at noon: even thy darkness shall be like the morning-light.

Ver. 18. *And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope: yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.*] Thou shalt be confident, though any evil threaten thee, because there is hope God will deliver thee: thou shalt dig wells of water, and none shall disturb thy tents or thy flocks.

Ver. 19. *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.*] Thou shalt be in perfect peace, and none shall disquiet thee: yea, the multitude shall sue to thee for thy favour, and the greatest persons shall desire thy friendship.

Ver. 20. *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*] But the wicked shall in vain look for happiness: they shall not escape their deserved punishment, but their hope of deliverance shall faint away.

CHAP. XII.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter Job taxes all his three friends with too great a conceit of their own wisdom, which had not, as yet, taught them common humanity to the miserable. And lets them understand, that he needs not come to them to learn, but might rather teach them the falseness of that proposition, wherewith Zophar had concluded his speech, concerning the infelicity of the wicked. For the contrary, he tells them, was obvious to sense, ver. 7, 8, &c. And as for what Zophar had discoursed of the wisdom and power of God, he would have them know, that he was as well skilled in those points as the best of them, and understood as much of the history of ancient times; particularly of the vain attempt at the tower of Babel, unto which it is probable he hath respect in the fourteenth verse; as, in all the following, he seems to have to what you read in Gen. xiv. 5—8. of the rooting out of those fierce giants the Rephaim, and other such-like barbarous and rapacious people; of the particulars of which we have now no records remaining.

Ver. 1. *AND Job answered and said.*] To this Job replied in such words as these:

Ver. 2. *No doubt but you are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*] You believe then there are no men of sense in the world besides yourselves: so that if you were dead, there would be no wisdom left among us.

Ver. 3. *But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?*] Let not your vanity abuse you; I have understanding as well and as much as you; and so hath every body else: for I see nothing singular in all you have said.

Ver. 4. *I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.*] I am not so simple but I see how you deride your friend, when you bid him call upon God that he may answer him. But this is no new thing, the best of men have been mocked at on this fashion.

Ver. 5. *He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.*] Though he be as a lamp, yet they who are dazzled with the splendour of worldly prosperity despise him: the upright is never acceptable to him who is not steadfast in his goings.

Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*] For they thrive and flourish, though they rob the just; and even such men live without disturbance, as provoke God with those very things which he bestows upon them with his own hand.

Ver. 7. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.*] Thou needest not go any farther than to the beasts or birds, to learn how well the wicked fare.

Ver. 8. *Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*] The earth brings forth her fruit to them abundantly; and the fishes of the sea deny them not their service.

Ver. 9. *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*] Who is so stupid as not to understand by all these that God hath ordered it should be thus?

Ver. 10. *In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.*] Whose right it is to dispose of all creatures, as well as of mankind.

Ver. 11. *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste meat?*] Cannot the mind distinguish truth from falsehood, as exactly as the palate sweet from bitter?

Ver. 12. *With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.*] And the older we grow, the wiser one would think we should be.

Ver. 13. *With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.*] But what is all our wisdom to God's? who (as he knows, so) can do all things; and he never errs in his understanding, or miscarries in his designs.

Ver. 14. *Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.*] It is not in the power of any creature to repair that which he throws down; nor to extricate that man whom he casts into difficulties and straits.

Ver. 15. *Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up; also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.*] If he deny us rain, the waters themselves dry up: and he sends such floods as break the strongest banks.

Ver. 16. *With him is strength and wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his.*] Nor is his wisdom, as I said, inferior to his power: but the subtlety of those who deceive is as well known to him as the silliness of those who are deceived.

Ver. 17. *He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh*

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the judges fools.] He defeats the wisest statesmen, and infatuates the ablest senators.

Ver. 18. *He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.*] So that they are not able to keep the crown on the head of their kings; but they are stripped of their royal ornaments, and bound in chains.

Ver. 19. *He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.*] Their great ministers are carried captives with them; nor are the most powerful forces they can raise able to defend them.

Ver. 20. *He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.*] Eloquence, fidelity, and the prudence which hath been gained by long experience, signify as little for their preservation.

Ver. 21. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.*] The nobleness of their birth or their munificence is not at all regarded: and he dissolves the strongest confederacies, into which their friends enter for their support.

Ver. 22. *He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.*] No plot can be so secretly carried but he discovers it; and brings to light that which hath been contrived in the greatest obscurity.

Ver. 23. *He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.*] Whole nations (as well as their princes) are perfectly under his power; whom he sometimes multiplies, and again diminishes by war, famine, or pestilence. He enlarges their bounds, and, when he pleases, reduces them into narrower limits.

Ver. 24. *He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.*] He deprives their leaders both of courage and judgment; and brings them into such confusion, that they know not which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 25. *They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.*] Blind men see as much as they; and their counsels and motions are as uncertain as those of a man in drink.

CHAP. XIII.

ARGUMENT.

From the foregoing observations, Job still continues to assert, first, his own understanding to be equal, or rather superior, to theirs; who had better therefore learn of him, and know that God was not pleased to have his providence defended by untruths; nor to see men partial, though it was in his behalf; and, secondly, his own integrity to be such, that he would ever defend it against all accusers, even before God himself: whom he desires to take cognizance of the cause, and to let him understand what the crimes were for which he was thus severely handled. For he protests that he was ignorant of them; though the punishments he had endured were more than sufficient to awaken the sense of his guilt, he being almost consumed by them.

Ver. 1. *LO, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.*] I have said nothing, I would have you know, but what I myself have observed; or received from credible reports, which I have found to be certainly true.

Ver. 2. *What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.*] Whereby you may see I had reason to say, that I know as much as you, and am not to learn of you.

Ver. 3. *Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.*] Would to God I might speak with him, and lay my reasons open before him; and be troubled with your discourses no longer.

Ver. 4. *But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.*] For your conclusions are false; and, like unskilful physicians, you exasperate the diseases which you cannot cure.

Ver. 5. *Oh that you would altogether hold your peace; and it should be your wisdom.*] The best proof of your wisdom would be to say never a word more of these matters.

Ver. 6. *Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.*] But listen a little to me, I beseech you, and hear by what reasons I will defend myself.

Ver. 7. *Will you speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?*] Doth God stand in need of untruths to justify his proceedings? cannot he be righteous unless I be wicked?

Ver. 8. *Will you accept his person? will ye contend for God?*] Hath he so little right on his side, that you must shew him favour? or do you think to oblige his majesty by doing me wrong.

Ver. 9. *Is it good that he should search you out? or, as one man mocketh another, do you so mock him?*] Will it be to your advantage, think you, that God should strictly examine all you have said? or can he be deceived with your flatteries, as frail men may be?

Ver. 10. *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.*] No; he will severely chastise you, for designing to gratify him by condemning me.

Ver. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?*] The incomparable excellence of God, one would think, should have frighted away such a thought; and his dreadful majesty made you not presume to imagine he wanted your patronage.

Ver. 12. *Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.*] Whose remonstrances, on his behalf, are no better than dust; and the arguments you accumulate but like so many heaps of dirt.

Ver. 13. *Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.*] Keep silence, therefore, and do not disturb me in my speech; for I will omit nothing.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?*] And I am so conscious to myself of my innocence, that I must still wonder why I suffer such enraging miseries, and am exposed to so many dangers.

Ver. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*] Assure yourselves I will never forego this plea; but still maintain mine innocence, though I were at the last gasp, and had no hope of life.

Ver. 16. *He also shall be my salvation: for a hypocrite shall not come before him.*] And I am confident God him-

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self would vindicate it; for I am no hypocrite, nor shall false accusations be admitted at his tribunal.

Ver. 17. *Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.*] Do not interrupt me, but give due attention to what I am about to say.

Ver. 18. *Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.*] See, I beseech you, I refuse not to be tried, but have framed a process against myself; and am so sure of the goodness of my cause, that I know I shall be acquitted.

Ver. 19. *Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.*] Let who will come and accuse me, I am ready to answer: for to hold my peace, on so just an occasion, is death to me.

Ver. 20. *Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee.*] Let me only beg, O great Judge of all, that thou wilt forbear to make use of two things against me; and then I will appear confidently, to plead my cause before thee.

Ver. 21. *Withdraw thine hand far from me; and let not thy dread make me afraid.*] Do not continue my pain: and let not the sight of thy majesty put me in disorder.

Ver. 22. *Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me.*] Then summon me to thy bar, and charge me, and I will defend myself; or let me question thee, and do thou clear thy proceedings against me.

Ver. 23. *How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.*] Tell me what, and how many, are mine iniquities and sins, for I am ignorant of them: I desire to know them all, great and small, against thee, or against my neighbour.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?*] For what cause am I thus afflicted, and used as if I was thine enemy?

Ver. 25. *Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?*] What honour wilt thou get by employing thy power against one, who is no more able to stand before thee, than the leaf to resist the wind which sports with it, or the dry stubble the fire which instantly consumes it?

Ver. 26. *For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*] For thou hast passed severe decrees against me, and punisheth me for the crimes which were committed before I well knew what I did.

Ver. 27. *Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.*] And thou dost execute them as severely; for I can no more escape than a malefactor whose feet are in the stocks, who is encompassed with a vigilant guard, and cannot stir a foot from the place where he is.

Ver. 28. *And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.*] But there he rots and wastes away, as I do, like a garment that is eaten by the moths.

CHAP. XIV.

ARGUMENT.

The good man proceeds to plead with God for some mitigation of his miseries, from the consideration of the shortness of life, and the trouble that naturally belongs to it; which he thought might move him not to add any greater burden of suffering; especially considering, that when he is dead he cannot come into the world again (as the plants do) to receive the marks of his favour. Which he hopes therefore he will bestow upon him here, notwithstanding the depth of his misery; (which tempted him to the borders of impatience, ver. 13.) it being very easy for him to remove his affliction, though never so heavy, whose power is so great, that he removed mountains out of their place, and brought a deluge, as we may say, of sand (as they saw sometimes in their neighbouring countries) to overflow the most fruitful regions.

Ver. 1. *MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*] Man is born to die; and, as he cannot live long, so his short life is subject to many cares.

Ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*] He may be compared to a flower, which is beautiful indeed, but suddenly cropped; or to the shadow on a dial, which never stands still, but is hasting away apace.

Ver. 3. *And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*] And dost thou concern thyself so far about such a wretch, as to summon him before thy tribunal, and there pass dreadful sentences against him, as thou dost against me?

Ver. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*] The common frailty of humanity might make thee overlook him; for nothing, thou knowest, can be better than the original from whence it comes.

Ver. 5. *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*] Or if he were more considerable than he is, yet, since he can live but to such a time as thou hast prefixed, beyond which he cannot prolong his days one moment:

Ver. 6. *Turn from him that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day.*] That I should think might move thee not to torment him in this manner; but to let him alone till that appointed time come, which will be as welcome to him as the end of his labour is to the hireling.

Ver. 7. *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*] And after that, there is more hope of a tree than of him; for if it be cut down to the very ground, the body of it will grow again, and thrust out new branches:

Ver. 8. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground.*] Nay, though it hath been so long cut down that the roots of it are grown old, and the trunk seems quite dead;

Ver. 9. *Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.*] Yet when it is well moistened it will shoot up again, and bring forth boughs, as if it were but newly planted.

Ver. 10. *But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?*] But when man dies, he crumbles into dust; and none can set it together to make him live again.

Ver. 11. *As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up.*] As lakes and great rivers are dried up, when their waters find a new channel:

Ver. 12. *So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens*

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be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.] So man laid down in his grave shall come no more hither; but in that bed of dust shall sleep perpetually.

Ver. 13. *Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!*] I wish I were buried alive, rather than suffer such things; or that I could take sanctuary somewhere till this storm be over; or at least thou wouldest set me a certain time when thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 14. *If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*] Then (though there be no hope of living here again after I am dead) thou shalt see I will patiently wait all the days of that appointed time, till that happy change come.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*] Do thou speak the word, and it shall be done; shew thou hast some love to thy own workmanship.

Ver. 16. *For now thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?*] Though now thou seemest to number every step I have trod in all my life, and dost not spare to punish every fault;

Ver. 17. *My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up mine iniquity.*] Having taken as great care the memory of them should not be lost, as if they had been sealed up in a bag, and added one punishment to another:

Ver. 18. *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.*] Yet notwithstanding the highest mountains may fall like a leaf, and the rock be removed from his place.

Ver. 19. *The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.*] The waters, though soft, wear away the hard stones, and the very dust or sand sometimes overflows the fruitful fields: why, therefore (since such strange and unexpected things come to pass), may there not be some hope for miserable man?

Ver. 20. *Thou prevailest for ever against him; and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.*] Who is not able to stand before thee; but must yield and be gone for ever when thou requirest: thou spoilest his beauty, and sendest him away into another world.

Ver. 21. *His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*] And then, whether his children, whom he leaves behind, be rich, or whether they be poor, it is indifferent to him; for he knows not what passes here.

Ver. 22. *But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.*] But while he is in flesh he cannot but be in pain for them, and his soul is inwardly grieved to see their misery.

CHAP. XV.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter Eliphaz renews the dispute with more eagerness and fierceness than before; being very angry that Job slighted them so much, and thought himself so wise (as he interpreted it), that he disdained their exhortations, and would not follow the counsel they had given him, of confessing his sins, and praying to God for forgiveness; (v. 8. viii. 4—6.) but except this one argument (that he need not be ashamed to confess his guilt, when he considered how prone all men are to sin), there is nothing new in his discourse; but he merely urges what he had asserted at first, from his own and the wisest men's observations, that they are not the good, but the wicked, whom God punishes with such calamities as now were fallen upon Job. And with great ornaments of speech, he most admirably describes the vengeance which God is wont to take upon impious tyrants; having his eye, I suppose, upon Nimrod, or some such mighty oppressor.

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said.*] Then Eliphaz, incensed with these reproaches, rose up again, and said;

Ver. 2. *Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?*] Dost thou pretend to be wise, who answerest us with such empty discourses; and whose heart is swollen with such pernicious opinions, and vents them with so much vehemence?

Ver. 3. *Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?*] Is this thy wisdom, which teaches thee to wrangle to no purpose, and to pour out words for which one is never the better?

Ver. 4. *Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.*] The better did I say? They destroy all religion, and discourage men from pouring out their complaint in prayer to God.

Ver. 5. *For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.*] Thou rather teachest them to dispute with him; whereby thou hast proclaimed thine iniquity, while with fallacious words thou seekest to dissemble it.

Ver. 6. *Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips testify against thee.*] I need produce no farther testimony against thee; for thy own mouth hath done the business, and condemned thee of impiety.

Ver. 7. *Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?*] Thou art but a man, why dost thou talk as if thou wert God, or at least wert made before the world?

Ver. 8. *Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?*] Wast thou admitted into God's secret counsels, and thereby engrossedst all wisdom to thyself?

Ver. 9. *What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?*] Wherein (to retort thy own words upon thee) doth thy knowledge exceed ours? Let us hear what secret thou hast learnt, which we do not understand.

Ver. 10. *With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*] If by age and long experience men acquire wisdom, there are some of us who are much elder than thy father.

Ver. 11. *Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?*] Why dost thou slight then those Divine consolations which we have given thee? Hast thou some secret ones which nobody else knows of?

Ver. 12. *Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what doth thine eyes wink at.*] What makes thee have such a high opinion of thyself, and in this manner contemn us?

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Ver. 13. *That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?*] Nay, oppose thyself to God, and take the boldness to argue with him?

Ver. 14. *What is man, that he should be clean? he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?*] Thou wilt maintain thy innocence, thou sayest; but thou forgettest sure what thou art and whence thou comest; else thou wouldest not stand upon thy justification, nor complain that thou art wronged.

Ver. 15. *Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.*] Remember what I told thee before, (iv. 18.) that the angels are not immutably good; the heavenly inhabitants, I say, are not without their spots.

Ver. 16. *How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*] What a loathsome and filthy creature then is man, who is as prone to sin, as he is to drink when he is dry.

Ver. 17. *I will shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare.*] Do not stop thine ears whilst I shew thee thine error, and I will say nothing but what mine own eyes have seen,

Ver. 18. *Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it.*] And which wise men have observed, and their fathers before them, who have reported it to their children:

Ver. 19. *Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.*] And they no mean persons neither, but such as were alone thought worthy to be entrusted with the government of whole countries, which no foreign power could enter (as they have done thine) while they ruled.

Ver. 20. *The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.*] The wicked tyrant (this is their and my observation) is never free from inward torment; all his life long he is in dread of some greater oppressor than himself.

Ver. 21. *A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.*] His guilt so pursues him, that it makes him fear some mischief or other is still falling on him; and in the most peaceable time he doth not think himself in safety.

Ver. 22. *He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*] When he lies down he is afraid he shall be killed before the morning; and he fancies nothing but naked swords round about him.

Ver. 23. *He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.*] He shall wander to get a morsel of bread where he can find it; and when he hath it, he shall imagine it will prove his poison.

Ver. 24. *Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.*] The distress and anguish wherein he sees himself shall affright him; they shall press upon him and overcome him, as a king doth his enemies whom he hath surrounded with his forces.

Ver. 25. *For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.*] Which will be a just punishment of his audacious impiety; because he defied God, and resolutely set himself in opposition to the Almighty:

Ver. 26. *He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers.*] Who will suddenly lay fast hold on him and kill him, though he be never so well armed:

Ver. 27. *Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.*] Because he minds nothing but his belly; and, casting away all fear of God, nourishes up himself in luxury, pride, and haughtiness.

Ver. 28. *And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.*] Possessing cities which he hath laid desolate; and houses out of which he hath driven the owners, and which are running to ruin.

Ver. 29. *He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.*] But the riches he hath gotten by such violence and oppression shall come to nothing: he may design great things, but shall leave them imperfect.

Ver. 30. *He shall depart out of darkness: the flame shall dry up his branches; and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.*] When his troubles begin, they shall not end till they have destroyed both him and his children: one word of God's mouth (so mad a thing it is to set himself against Heaven) will utterly consume him.

Ver. 31. *Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity; for vanity shall be his recompence.*] Let such examples teach him that is seduced into evil ways, not to trust to such uncertain greatness; for vexatious disappointments shall be all that he will get by it.

Ver. 32. *It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.*] He shall meet with them when he little thinks of it; and see his children wither away as well as himself.

Ver. 33. *He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.*] They shall die before their time, as the unripe grape, or the blossom of the vine or olive, are struck with hail, or bitten off by the frost.

Ver. 34. *For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.*] The most numerous families of such ungodly men shall have none in them left: the Divine vengeance shall destroy the house which was built with ill-gotten goods.

Ver. 35. *They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepared deceit.*] And they justly deserve to be thus punished, because all they design and do is nothing but the oppression and ruin of their subjects: against whom when one design miscarries, they conceive new arts to undo them.

CHAP. XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Job reproves the vanity and obstinacy of Eliphaz, in repeating the same things over again, and still persisting in his inhumanity, though he saw his case so pitiable: which he again describes, to make him sensible how unworthily he was treated by him and the rest of his friends; who, in effect, joined with his enemies, who took this opportunity to rail at him. Whereas there was no crime of his appeared to justify their accusations, and to make good Eliphaz's argument: which signified nothing, unless he meant to say, that Job was like that wicked tyrant of whom he had discoursed. Which was so far from any

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show of truth, that he protests he never hurt any body, and was always a sincere lover of God, &c. (ver. 17, 18.) The truth of which God knew, to whose bar he appeals from their unjust sentence.

Ver. 1. *THEN Job answered and said.*] Here Job interrupted him, and said,

Ver. 2. *I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.*] Thou dost but repeat what hath been often said already: such comforters as you are as troublesome as my sufferings.

Ver. 3. *Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?*] May not one endlessly pour out such empty discourses? (as I may with more reason call thine than thou didst mine, xv. 3.) I wonder at thy confidence, that, having so little to say, thou shouldest take upon thee to answer.

Ver. 4. *I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.*] I could insult as well as you; and, if we could change conditions, let you see how easy it would be to oppress you with such words as these, in a grave fashion to mock at your calamities.

Ver. 5. *But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.*] But I abhor the thought of such a guilt: I would not fail to fortify you, in that case, with the best arguments I could invent; and carefully abstain from the least word that should augment your grief.

Ver. 6. *Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?*] Though as for myself, I find my misery admits of no consolation: for whether I defend my innocence, or silently suffer you to condemn me, it makes no difference.

Ver. 7. *But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.*] God hath long since quite tired me with one trouble upon another. Thou hast not ceased, O God, till thou hast left me neither goods, nor children, no, nor a friend to comfort me.

Ver. 8. *And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.*] The furrows in my face (which is not old) shew the greatness of my affliction: which is extremely augmented by him, who rises up with false accusations to take away mine honour, as this consumption will do my life.

Ver. 9. *He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnashes upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.*] He rends my good name in pieces with a passion equal to his hatred: my enemy is enraged against me, and cruelly sets himself to spy out the least occasion to calumniate me.

Ver. 10. *They have gaped upon me with their mouths; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.*] There is no small number of such as these, who look like so many wild beasts coming to devour me; having already most shamefully abused me, and joined themselves together to give full satisfaction to their wrath, wherewith they are filled against me.

Ver. 11. *God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*] So God will have it; who hath abandoned the protection of me, and delivered me bound into the hands of the ungodly, to use me at their pleasure.

Ver. 12. *I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.*] How happy was I heretofore! and now I am crushed in pieces: from an eminent condition he hath thrown me down into the most despicable; and there I am exposed (as a butt to the arrow) to all manner of indignities and miseries.

Ver. 13. *His archers compass me round about; he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.*] He is not content to take away all my goods, and destroy my family, but, to the reproach of friends (which strike like so many darts to my very heart), he hath added ulcers in every part of my body, with inward pains, which rack me without intermission; and, in one word, hath so mortally wounded me, as if my bowels were already shed upon the ground.

Ver. 14. *He breaketh me with breach upon breach; he runneth upon me like a giant.*] Before one wound be closed he makes another, and in such violent a manner, that I can make no more resistance than a dwarf can do against a giant.

Ver. 15. *I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.*] The sackcloth which I put on at the first now cleaves so fast to me, as if I had sewed it to my skin; and all my authority and honour is changed into contempt.

Ver. 16. *My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.*] My face is dirty, and mine eyes in a manner quite put out by the very tears which have fallen from thence.

Ver. 17. *Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.*] And yet I must still say, I never offered such a violence as this to any man, and was always (so false is Eliphaz's accusation, xv. 4.) a sincere worshipper of God.

Ver. 18. *O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.*] If this be not true, let my blood be left to the dogs to lick, when I am dead, and let neither God nor man regard my complaint while I am alive.

Ver. 19. *Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.*] But what need these imprecations? The great God who rules over all is my witness, and can testify how just I have been towards my neighbours, and how pious towards himself.

Ver. 20. *My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*] From your judgment therefore (who, instead of comforting my innocence, scornfully set yourselves to defame me) I appeal to his; and beseech him with perpetual tears to vindicate me.

Ver. 21. *Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!*] I am so assured of the goodness of my cause (as well as of his justice), that I wish for nothing more than to have it speedily heard and tried by him, in the same manner that pleas are held before earthly judges.

Ver. 22. *When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*] For my life cannot last long; and I know that when I am gone I cannot return hither again, for him to do me justice.

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CHAP. XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Here Job desires he may be tried presently before God's tribunal, his life being just upon the point to expire, as he had said in the end of the former chapter; and continues to urge again in this, because his friends were very unfit judges in this case, and had passed such a sentence upon him as upright men would never approve of. Whereby they had given him a new vexation, to hear them talk so idly, and put him in hope of recovering his happiness, if he would follow their admonitions, when they saw him just dropping into the grave, which was the only thing, he saith, that he could hope for.

Ver. 1. *MY breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.*] My vital spirits are spent, they give but a glimmering and dying light; whereby I can see nothing but graves on every side prepared for me.

Ver. 2. *Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*] How can I support my spirits, when my friends, who should comfort me, mock at all I say for myself? This so bitterly exasperates me, that I cannot take a wink of sleep, nor think of any thing else.

Ver. 3. *Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?*] Once more therefore I beseech thee, O God, to assure me that thou wilt judge my cause thyself: let somebody undertake for thee: who is it that on thy behalf will engage to do me right?

Ver. 4. *For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.*] Not these friends of mine; for they comprehend nothing of the way of thy judgments: therefore, thou shalt not confer this honour on them who talk so absurdly.

Ver. 5. *He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.*] I must speak the truth of them (though it displease them), and not soothe them up in their errors: for he that flatters his friends, when he should reprove them, may look long enough before either he or his children find one that will deal sincerely with them.

Ver. 6. *He hath made me also a by-word of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.*] This very person who spake last hath made me a proverb in every body's mouth: and it is the vulgar pastime to talk of my calamities.

Ver. 7. *Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.*] No wonder then that excessive sorrow hath darkened mine eyes; and that all the flesh of my body is so consumed, that I am but the shadow of a man.

Ver. 8. *Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*] Upright men hereafter will be astonished at the cruel sentence which my friends pass upon me; and the innocent will resolutely oppose the wicked, when he judges the worse of piety, because of my afflictions.

Ver. 9. *The righteous also shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*] The righteous will not be moved by such arguments to change his purpose of well-doing; much less will he do any evil action, but grow rather the better by adversity, and add perseverance to his piety.

Ver. 10. *But as for you all, do you return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.*] And truly I wish that all you, who have charged me so heavily, would consider things better, and hearken to what I have said: for I must tell you again, there is not a man of you that judges truly of my case.

Ver. 11. *My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.*] Repent of your harsh censures before I die, as I must speedily, my joys being quite gone, and all the hopeful designs, which had possessed my heart, being utterly subverted.

Ver. 12. *They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.*] Instead whereof other thoughts are come to torment me; which will not let me sleep in the night, nor enjoy any pleasure in the day.

Ver. 13. *If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.*] If I hope for any thing now (as you would have me), it is for a grave: that is the only house I can promise myself; there I am going to rest in a bed where I shall not be disturbed.

Ver. 14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.*] I have already made so near an alliance with death, that my father and mother and nearest kindred are nothing so near me as worms and rottenness.

Ver. 15. *And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?*] How vain then are all the hopes you would have me feed myself withal? (xi. 15, 16, &c.) Who shall see, when I am sure I shall not, the happiness you would have me look for here?

Ver. 16. *They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.*] All these hopes you speak of shall sink down into the bottom of the grave; when you, my friends, as well as I, shall take up your lodging in the dust.

CHAP. XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter Bildad again takes up the dispute, and pretends to reply to what Job had said. But I do not see any thing new, saving the description he makes (as Eliphaz had done before him) of the ruin which shall inevitably fall, according to the fixed rules of Providence (so he fancied), upon the wicked and his family; notwithstanding all the assistance that his friends and allies can lend him for his preservation. And this he seems to imply was the fate of Job; whom he doth not so much as exhort to repentance, (as he had done in his former discourse, chap. viii.) being very angry with him, that he had no higher esteem of their wisdom.

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said.*] Then Bildad the Shuhite, seeing Job continue in his first opinion, rose up, and said,

Ver. 2. *How long will it be ere you make an end of words? mark, and afterward we will speak.*] How long shall we continue this dispute? Let us make an end of it, unless he will attend better to our reasons; then we will go on to argue with him.

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Ver. 3. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?*] To what purpose is it to talk with one who tells us we understand nothing, (xvii. 4. 10.) but looks upon us as a company of dull beasts, into whom nothing of wisdom will enter?

Ver. 4. *He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?*] Such is his passion, which will not let him see how he himself, like a wild beast, tears his own soul in pieces with impatient anger. What art thou, that God for thy sake should cease to govern the world by his known laws, which are fixed and immutable?

Ver. 5. *Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.*] Say what thou wilt, it is an everlasting truth, that the wicked shall not continue in the splendour wherein we sometime see him: but though he seem to sit as by a great fire (warm in his wealth, and honour, and power), there shall not remain so much as a spark to comfort him.

Ver. 6. *The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.*] The glory of his family shall be turned into contempt, and all their joy shall end in sorrow.

Ver. 7. *The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.*] The attempts which his power makes to preserve his greatness shall but more perplex him: and his own devices shall prove his overthrow.

Ver. 8. *For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.*] He shall entangle himself by his own wiles; and having contrived himself into danger, every step he takes in pursuance of his designs shall farther ensnare him.

Ver. 9. *The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.*] Before he is aware he shall find it so impossible to disengage himself; that they who thirst after his blood, or wealth, or place, shall easily lay hold on him.

Ver. 10. *The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.*] He shall not foresee his danger; but be caught as a bird or a beast in a snare or a trap, when he thinks himself secure in his proceedings.

Ver. 11. *Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.*] Then he shall be surrounded with a thousand terrors; and which way soever he runs to save himself, he shall meet with them.

Ver. 12. *His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.*] He shall pine away till he hath no strength remaining: for nothing but mischief shall attend and accompany him in every place.

Ver. 13. *It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the first-born of death shall devour his strength.*] Rottenness shall eat up his bones; I say, his very bones shall rot and be consumed.

Ver. 14. *His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.*] Whatsoever he relies upon for the support of himself and family, it shall utterly fail him, nay, help to hasten his death, the most dreadful of all his enemies.

Ver. 15. *It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.*] That man had best take heed, who shall have a mind to dwell in his house when he hath left it; for thunder and lightning shall destroy it.

Ver. 16. *His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.*] And it shall never be built up again, nor shall his family be restored; but be like a tree, whose roots are so dried up in the earth that it shall never shoot forth any more branches.

Ver. 17. *His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.*] His very memory shall perish, as well as himself; and his name never be mentioned among men unless it be to make him infamous.

Ver. 18. *He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.*] He shall be cast out of his splendid greatness into some obscure grave; and removed out of the world as some unclean thing.

Ver. 19. *He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.*] None of his descendants shall survive him; nor any of his kindred remain to keep up his name.

Ver. 20. *They that come after him shall be astonied at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.*] Future times shall read of this severe vengeance of God upon him with astonishment, as they who see it shall be seized with horror.

Ver. 21. *Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*] Certain it is, that this is a just description of the miserable condition of the wicked: they that do not honour God shall thus be abased.

CHAP. XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The purpose of this chapter (in which Job replies to Bildad) is to shew, that it would be sufficient for him also merely to repeat the same things, as they had done in ten discourses: but the more to aggravate their want of compassion, or rather cruelty, towards him, he represents several new things, which made his condition more deplorable than he had hitherto said. One of which was, that he could not tell the reason why God dealt thus with him; who notwithstanding was so gracious, that, in the depth of this misery and anguish, he affords him a glimmering of a comfortable hope (which began now to appear in his soul, and which he had hitherto wanted), that God would at last take pity upon him, and shew his friends their error, by restoring him to his former health and splendour. That seems to be the literal meaning of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses, and of the two next that follow: where, among other things, he says, he doubted not but his Redeemer should stand at last upon the earth (so it is in the Hebrew, the word *day* not being there), that is, quite overcome the devil, and deliver him from these distresses; like a mighty conqueror, who keeps the field, when all his opposers are routed and fled away. But in this he was, as St. Austin calls him, "eximius prophetarum," and prophesied of the resurrection of the body at the last day.

Ver. 1. *THEN Job answered and said.*] Then Job, hearing him also repeat his former discourse, (chap. viii.)

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wherein he reflected on him as a wicked man, burst out again into these words:

Ver. 2. *How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?*] Will you never cease to torment me, and to break my very heart with your words, which grate upon me as sorely as all the miseries I endure?

Ver. 3. *These ten times have ye reproached me: you are not ashamed that you make yourselves strange to me.*] You have reproached me often enough, one would think, and yet you are not ashamed to continue your hard-hearted censures, as if I were a perfect stranger, and my manner of life utterly unknown to you.

Ver. 4. *And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.*] Suppose that I have done amiss (which is more than you know), I suffer sufficiently for it; and it doth not become you to increase my sufferings by your reproaches.

Ver. 5. *If indeed you will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach.*] But if you will still proceed to lift up your voice to declaim against me, and allege my calamities, which have made me contemptible, as an argument to condemn me;

Ver. 6. *Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.*] Let this answer suffice you; that I am sensible it is God's doing; who, having laid me thus low, and environed me with unavoidable miseries, calls upon you to compassionate, rather than reproach me.

Ver. 7. *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.*] And my case is the more pitiable, because I know not the cause of all this; nor can have any audience or redress, though I appeal to God with the loudest cries, and protest to him that I am innocent.

Ver. 8. *He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.*] There is no way open for my escape; but his plagues surround me so on every side, that I am at my wit's end, and know not which way to turn myself.

Ver. 9. *He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.*] He hath not merely stripped me of my ornaments, and taken that dignity and authority from me wherewith I was invested;

Ver. 10. *He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.*] But brought me to such utter ruin, that, like a tree plucked up by the very roots, I have not so much as hope remaining, which is the only comfort of the miserable.

Ver. 11. *He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.*] For he hath done all this with such violence, as if he were extremely incensed against me, and looked upon me as his enemy.

Ver. 12. *His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.*] Whole armies of evils, by his order, have at the same time invaded me, and laid such a strait siege to me, that not the smallest comfort I had could escape their fury.

Ver. 13. *He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.*] I looked for some relief from my brethren, but they were so astonished at the number and dreadfulness of my calamities, that they durst not approach me; and as for my neighbours, who formerly so much courted my acquaintance, they truly keep aloof off, as if they had never known me.

Ver. 14. *My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.*] They whom nature inclined to it have failed to perform the duties of humanity towards me; and they to whom I was tied by a stronger bond than nature, have forgotten the friendship there was between us.

Ver. 15. *They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.*] They that have been kindly entertained at my house, nay, the people of my family, have forgot the respect they were wont to give me, and look upon me as if they had no relation to me.

Ver. 16. *I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.*] I called to my slave, and he regarded not what I said: no, not when I beseeched him, as if he had been my master.

Ver. 17. *My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.*] Which is the less wonder, since I am become so loathsome, that my wife will not come near me, though I have conjured her to do it by the dear memory of our children, those common pledges of our mutual love.

Ver. 18. *Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.*] After these examples young children and fools despise me: and when I rise up to invite them to me, abusive language is all the return they make to my courtesy.

Ver. 19. *All my inward friends abhorred me; and they whom I loved are turned against me.*] And, which is worst of all, the men whom I entrusted with my greatest secrets, cannot endure me; and they who have received so many tokens of my love are become mine enemies.

Ver. 20. *My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.*] All these afflictions have so wasted me, that I am little more than skin and bone: a mouth to complain withal is all the flesh that is left me.

Ver. 21. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*] O ye my friends (if you still deserve that name), who are the only persons that undertake to comfort me, have pity, have pity, I beseech you, upon a miserable wretch, and consider what wounds the hand of God hath given me.

Ver. 22. *Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?*] Will you assume the same prerogative, and think you have the same right to afflict me? and doth it not suffice you to see my body all consumed, but you will vex my very soul also with your perverse reasonings?

Ver. 23. *Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!*] Oh that the protestations and appeals I have so often made might remain upon record, and be registered in the public acts and monuments!

Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!*] May they be graven upon a plate of lead with an iron pen; nay, cut into a rock or marble pillar, to continue to all posterity!

Ver. 25. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*] For my hope, which was as dead as myself, (xvii. 13. 15. xix. 10.) begins to revive; because, though I seem for the present

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to be forsaken of God, yet I know that he can hereafter deliver me out of this miserable condition, since he lives for ever; and will, I doubt not, at last appear victorious over all the enemies which now oppress me.

Ver. 26. *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*] And though the worms which have eaten my skin should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched body, yet I feel my soul inspired with a comfortable belief, that before I die I shall see myself restored, by the mercy of God, to a happy estate.

Ver. 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*] He will not let me always lie under these reproaches; but I begin to assure myself, that with these very eyes I shall see him vindicate my innocence; not only others, but I myself shall live to see it: and I even faint away with vehement desire to behold that happy day.

Ver. 28. *But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?*] Which will make you repent that you have thus persecuted me, who have not without ground thus long disputed this matter with you, but am sure the right lies on my side, and not on yours.

Ver. 29. *Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.*] Take my advice therefore in good time, and dread the just displeasure of God against you for your perverse reasonings (for his wrath punishes men's iniquities with the sword, or some such sore vengeance), whereby you will know to your cost, that there is a more righteous judgment than yours.

CHAP. XX.

ARGUMENT.

The abrupt beginning of this speech of Zophar shews that he was in a passion; which, though he pretends to bridle it, would not let him calmly consider the protestation which Job had made of his innocence. But he goes on in the old common place of the certain downfal of the wicked, be he never so powerful and well supported. Which he illustrates, indeed, after an excellent fashion, with great variety of figures and remarks upon histories as old as the world. In some of which he had observed, that the wicked after their fall had made notable attempts to get up again; but by the hand of God were so crushed, that they could never rise more. All the flaw in his discourse is this (which was common to him with the rest), that he imagined God never varied from this method; and therefore Job, without doubt, was a very bad man, though it did not appear he was so any other way, but by his infelicity.

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said.*] Here Zophar, though he had no new thing to produce, hastily interrupted Job, and said,

Ver. 2. *Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste.*] These words of thine make my former thoughts return again; and do so provoke me, that I am not able to forbear speaking any longer.

Ver. 3. *I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.*] While thou pretendest to correct my errors, I have heard myself rather shamefully reproached; yet I will not suffer my passion to reply, but the clear light of my understanding shall answer for me.

Ver. 4. *Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth.*] It seems thou dost not yet understand, though it be a truth as old as the world,

Ver. 5. *That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?*] That the happiness which the wicked, and he that counterfeits piety, so much boast of, is of no long standing, and will continue but for a few moments.

Ver. 6. *Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds.*] Though he should be advanced to the highest pitch of human greatness, and overtop all mankind as much as the highest trees do the lowest shrubs:

Ver. 7. *Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?*] Yet he shall fall as low as his dunghil; and, like it, be cast out for ever with contempt: they who saw him so flourishing shall be astonished at his ruin, and ask, with amazement, what is become of him?

Ver. 8. *He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.*] For his happiness hath no firmer foundation than a dream, of which we have no remembrance in the morning: or if we have, all the rich furniture and feasts which appear to us in our sleep vanish in an instant as soon as we awake.

Ver. 9. *The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.*] Just so shall he pass away, and all his glory with him: those eyes that were wont to gaze upon it with envy shall lose the sight of it, and never behold it more.

Ver. 10. *His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.*] His children shall have enough to do to pacify the rage of the poor, whom he hath oppressed; and he shall be forced with shame to restore with his own hands the goods he hath extorted from them.

Ver. 11. *His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.*] His very bones are full of pain and anguish. All which punishments of his secret sins shall stick to him till they bring him to his grave.

Ver. 12. *Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue.*] Though wickedness, like some dangerous meats, be pleasant in the acting, as they are in the chewing; so that a man is as desirous to continue it, as a glutton is to keep a long relish of those sweet morsels upon his palate:

Ver. 13. *Though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth.*] Though he will by no means part with it, when he is told the danger; but still retains it, as the other doth that meat in his mouth, which he is told is no better than poison:

Ver. 14. *Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.*] Yet, after it is committed, it wrings and gripes the conscience, as those dainty bits, when they are swallowed, do the bowels: the pleasure is turned into pain, the sweetness into such bitterness as brings the most sudden destruction.

Ver. 15. *He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.*]

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His ill-gotten goods, for instance, which he devoured with so much greediness and insatiable desire, shall never thrive with him; but he shall be forced to refund them with a torment far exceeding the pleasure wherewith he got them: God himself shall violently force them from him, and all his other riches together with them.

Ver. 16. *He shall suck the poison of asps; the viper's tongue shall slay him.*] Which shall prove as great and as deadly a torture to him, as if, when he squeezed the poor, he had sucked the poison of asps, or been bitten with a viper.

Ver. 17. *He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.*] This shall be his portion, instead of the pleasures of nature and art; which he flattered himself would flow in several streams to him perpetually.

Ver. 18. *That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.*] He may endeavour again with new labour to repair his broken fortune; but it shall be in vain: though he should get as much riches as he had before his change, he shall have no joy in them.

Ver. 19. *Because he hath oppressed, and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not.*] When he hath with new oppressions grinded the poor, and left them destitute, when he hath violently seized on a house, he shall not be able to build it.

Ver. 20. *Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.*] When he hath turned, as we say, every stone, and been as restless as a woman in travail; all his pains shall bring forth nothing of that which he desired.

Ver. 21. *There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.*] He shall have no more left him to eat, than he was wont to leave for others, which shall put him out of all hope of mending his condition.

Ver. 22. *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.*] The greater fulness you can suppose him to regain of worldly goods, the more he shall be distressed; for the hand of every man whom he hath afflicted shall lay hold on him to demand satisfaction.

Ver. 23. *When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.*] God himself also shall disturb him in his enjoyments, with the sorest effects of his Divine vengeance, which shall come pouring down from heaven, when he thinks himself most secure.

Ver. 24. *He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through.*] He shall run from a lesser danger to fall into a greater; as if one, avoiding the weapon in a man's hand, should be shot through with a bow of steel.

Ver. 25. *It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glistering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him.*] And though he should draw the shaft out of his body, and the wound in his bowels should be healed, he shall not escape so, for terrors shall perpetually accompany him.

Ver. 26. *All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.*] Nothing but dreadful dangers shall wait for him in those places where he hoped for safety: a fire not kindled by man shall devour him, and the same pestilence or burning fever shall take hold of the rest of his family.

Ver. 27. *The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.*] The heaven by thunder, lightning, or tempests, shall declare itself his enemy; and the earth, by wild beasts or serpents, or some other way, shall make war against him.

Ver. 28. *The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.*] His whole revenue shall melt away as waters poured out, in the day when God intends to punish him.

Ver. 29. *This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.*] This is the portion which God the righteous judge will allot to the wicked: thus will the Almighty reward his blasphemies, or his other proud and insolent words.

CHAP. XXI.

ARGUMENT.

To bring the dispute to a speedier issue, Job (after a short preface, reproving their incivility) comes close to the business: and doth not content himself merely with denying what they had said, but shews them where the fallacy in their discourse lay: *viz.* in concluding an universal from some particulars. For he maintains from as good history and observations as they could produce, that though God do make some wicked men such examples of his vengeance, as they had said, yet he lets others, and they of the vilest sort, atheists and deriders of Divine providence, live prosperously, and die peaceably, and have stately monuments built to perpetuate their memory. In brief, he shews there is great variety in God's proceedings about the punishment of the wicked; which makes them so bold as they are in their impiety. And seems to have respect to the history of Ishmael, who was a wild or barbarous man, grasping at all he could lay his hands on, and persecuting Isaac; and yet had twelve princes descended from him, settled in their several fortresses, as we read Gen. xvi. 12. xvii. 20. xxv. 16. And it is possible, to the history of Eliphaz's own country: Esau's ancestor being very rich, (Gen. xxxvi. 6, 7.) and having many dukes, whose posterity afterward advanced themselves to the title of kings, that sprang from him, before there was any king over the children of Israel, (Gen. xxxvi. 15. 31.)

Ver. 1. *BUT Job answered and said.*] But Job, who knew the falseness of this assertion (in which Zophar secretly struck at him), that God always punishes sinners in this manner, would not let it pass without answer, and therefore said again unto them;

Ver. 2. *Hear diligently my speech; and let this be your consolations.*] Let me prevail with you to attend better than you have done hitherto to my discourse: do me this kindness, and it shall serve instead of all the consolations I promised myself from you.

Ver. 3. *Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.*] Hear me patiently, and do not so hastily interrupt me as Zophar just now did; (xx. 2.) who,

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after I have done, may begin, if he please, to deride me again.

Ver. 4. *As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?*] Have I not all this while made my appeal to God? why then do you interrupt me, and take upon you to pronounce that sentence which I expect from him alone? but if my complaint had been to you, yet, seeing there is a just cause for it, can I choose but be vexed to see you will not hear me patiently?

Ver. 5. *Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.*] Consider well my misery, and being astonished at the greatness of it, and of your rudeness, be so civil now as to impose silence on yourselves, while I am speaking to you.

Ver. 6. *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.*] I am sure I myself am astonished at the very remembrance of it: were I free from it, yet the thought of what is past makes every joint of my body tremble.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*] Let me therefore again desire you to answer me this question more leisurely; if what you have said be true, how come we to see so many wicked men, not only enjoy all the good things of this life, but grow old in their enjoyment, and want no honour or power to which riches can advance them?

Ver. 8. *Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.*] Nay, live to see their children settled in the world; yea, their children's children grow up like young plants before their eyes.

Ver. 9. *Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.*] There is nobody disturbs their tranquillity in any of their habitations; nor doth God inflict any punishment on them for their sins.

Ver. 10. *Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.*] But extends his care even to the herds of cattle; where the kine never fail to conceive, and in due time bring forth their calves, and do not miscarry.

Ver. 11. *They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.*] And so do their flocks of sheep, with whom their wives may be compared; who bring forth their little ones as easily and as numerously: and their children dance about their houses, like the little lambs which skip about their fields.

Ver. 12. *They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.*] They lift up their voice, and sing to the timbrel and harp: they dance for joy at the sound of the pipe.

Ver. 13. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.*] In a word, they prolong their days to a great old age, in all manner of pleasure; and then do not lie long languishing on a bed of sickness or pain, but go easily and suddenly to their grave.

Ver. 14. *Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*] And yet these are the men that never think of God; or, if they do, presently bid those thoughts be gone; for they desire to have nothing to do with him or with his laws.

Ver. 15. *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?*] They know no such being, they say, as the Almighty; nor do they owe him any service: and if they should worship and serve him, they do not believe they shall be a whit the better for it.

Ver. 16. *Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.*] Do not imagine that I am of their opinion; I know very well that they cannot make themselves rich and prosperous without God; and therefore, far be it from me to join with them in their impiety.

Ver. 17. *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger.*] But yet, I say, how oft is it that we see the joy of these wicked men extinguished? Sometimes, indeed, God takes a speedy vengeance on them; but it is not his usual course to destroy them, and to give them such plagues and torments (as you speak of) for their portion.

Ver. 18. *They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.*] We do not see them so frequently as you say, driven away like stubble before the wind, and all their estates scattered like the chaff which is blown away with a storm.

Ver. 19. *God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.*] And when doth God punish the iniquity of the wicked in his children, (as you pretend he always doth, xx. 10.) and that while he lives, and beholds it himself?

Ver. 20. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.*] It is not such a common thing as you make it, for him to see his own ruin, and to feel the effects of the dreadful wrath of the Almighty.

Ver. 21. *For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?*] As for what befals his children when he is dead, he concerns not himself; it is nothing to him though they be cut off in their most flourishing estate.

Ver. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.*] Shall we be so bold as to instruct God how to govern the world? and tell him he is not just, unless he punish the wicked when we expect it? He judges the highest beings, and therefore knows sure how to govern us.

Ver. 23. *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.*] Who must not think to tie him to our rules. For one man dies in the highest and firmest worldly prosperity, meeting with nothing all his days to disturb his quiet and tranquillity.

Ver. 24. *His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.*] Health as well as riches accompany him to his grave; his ribs are fat, and his bones full of marrow, even in his old age.

Ver. 25. *And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.*] When another man (who perhaps is better than he) dies in great pain and anguish; after a miserable life, in which he never enjoyed any pleasure.

Ver. 26. *They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*] They shall both alike have the dust for their bed, and worms for their covering; and no distinction, that we can see, be made between them.

Ver. 27. *Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.*] I am sensible

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that in all this I very much contradict your thoughts; which are as well known to me as to yourselves: I see by what arguments you are studying to oppress me.

Ver. 28. *For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?*] I hear you say within yourselves, What is become of the house of Job, who lived like a prince? what difference is there between him and those wicked men, whose dwelling-places are destroyed?

Ver. 29. *Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens.*] But let me answer you; or rather go and ask the first passengers you meet with (for it is a thing vulgarly known), and they are not interested in our disputes, let them tell you their observations about God's providence:

Ver. 30. *That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.*] Which all agree in this, that the wicked is spared very often in a common calamity; though it be very general as well as terrible, yet many of them escape it.

Ver. 31. *Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?*] Which makes the wicked so bold, that none dare reprove him: much less is he in danger of being punished for his offences, since God spares him, and man dreads him.

Ver. 32. *Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.*] The pomp of his funeral is answerable to the splendour wherein he lived; and a stately monument is raised to preserve his memory, and represent him as if he were still living.

Ver. 33. *The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.*] There he lies quietly in the earth, and none disturbs his ashes: he suffers nothing but what all men shall do after him, as innumerable have done before him.

Ver. 34. *How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?*] See then how ill you discharge the office of comforters, whose answers have so little truth in them. For you maintain that prosperity is the inseparable companion of piety; when every body can tell you, that none flourish more than the wicked, and that calamities are common to all mankind.

CHAP. XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Though Job had clearly stated the controversy in the foregoing chapter, yet Eliphaz would not yield; but begins the combat a third time, without any ground at all, but a pure mistake, as I have expressed it in the first verse. And to avoid the reproof which had been given him, of repeating merely the same things; he now brings in a catalogue, though without any proof (so much was his anger and bitterness increased), of the particular sins, both against God and against his neighbour, of which he supposes Job to have been guilty. Else, he still boldly concludes, God would not have punished him with such severity; that there was not a greater instance of his indignation to be found any where; unless it was in the old world, and in Sodom. Yet he hath so much moderation, that he invites him at last to repentance, and promises him the happy fruit of it; as he had done in his first speech, but not in his second. Nay, he tells him, in conclusion, for his encouragement, that he should be able to do as much for a nation, as ten righteous men, could they have been found there, might have done for Sodom.

Ver. 1. *THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said.*] Then Eliphaz, not being able to deny all this, and yet not minding the scope of it (but imagining Job had accused the Divine Providence of injustice, in suffering the wicked to prosper and the righteous to be afflicted), grew very angry, and said,

Ver. 2. *Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?*] Is God ever the better for any thing that we do? because a wise man receives great benefit by his virtue, shall we think that God is a gainer by it too, and that he is bound to reward it?

Ver. 3. *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*] Doth he, who needs nothing (being possessor of all things), desire thou shouldest be righteous for his own advantage? or will it turn to his profit, if thou livest never so unblamably?

Ver. 4. *Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?*] Or, on the contrary, is he afraid thou shouldest hurt him by thy sins, and will therefore punish them? Is this the reason that he now afflicts thee, to prevent the damage they might do him?

Ver. 5. *Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*] Are not rather thy sins against God and against men so great and so numberless, that no other cause is to be sought of thy sore and multiplied punishments?

Ver. 6. *For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.*] For (to begin with those against man) thou hast been a tyrant, and exacted pawns of thine own kindred for little or nothing: and hath stripped even those of their garments, who had no more but just to cover their nakedness.

Ver. 7. *Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*] Thou hast been hard-hearted to the weary traveller, when thou sawest him ready to die with thirst or with hunger.

Ver. 8. *But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.*] But as for the great and the powerful, all thy estate was at his service; if he brought the title to any land in question, he was sure to carry the cause by thy favour to him.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.*] When, at the same time, the poor widow and orphans (whose protection God hath in a special manner commended to us) could not obtain the favour of having justice done them; but were crushed and broken by thee, and had all the means of defending themselves taken from them.

Ver. 10. *Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.*] Thou art guilty, sure enough, of some such sins as these, which are the cause that now thou art beset with these calamities, and most dreadful plagues have on a sudden confounded thee.

Ver. 11. *Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.*] Oh! thy blindness: dost thou

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not yet see how God hath proportioned thy punishment to his crimes? hath the depth of the afflictions wherein thou art plunged quite taken away all sense from thee?

Ver. 12. *Is not God in the height of heaven? and, behold, the height of the stars, how high they are!*] Is not God above the heavens? behold, he is the head and governor of the stars, although they be so high; and therefore, how shouldest thou think to escape his justice?

Ver. 13. *And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?*] But, perhaps, thou fanciest (such is thy impiety against him, as well as cruelty to thy neighbour) that, because he is so high, he minds not what is done here below: or that he cannot discern the difference of things so very remote through such a mist as is between us.

Ver. 14. *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.*] He is wrapped, thou imaginest, in such thick clouds, that they obscure us from his sight: or he is confined to the heavens, and so busied in their affairs, that he hath no leisure to attend to ours.

Ver. 15. *Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?*] But didst thou never observe, or hast thou forgotten, the course of the old atheistical world, who ran licentiously into all manner of wickedness?

Ver. 16. *Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*] To whom God therefore put a stop, by destroying them before their time, and carrying them quite away with the flood, when they thought themselves firmly settled in the earth;

Ver. 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?*] And were saying, (as thou wouldest have us believe the wicked now do, and yet prosper, xxi. 14.) We have nothing to do with God, nor he with us. Dost thou remember what God then did to them for their horrid ingratitude to him?

Ver. 18. *Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.*] Who had filled their houses with all manner of good things: O, vile wretches! whose wicked thoughts I abhor as much as thou thyself, (xxi. 16.)

Ver. 19. *The righteous see it, and are glad; and the innocent laugh them to scorn.*] Whose overthrow Noah and his family beholding, rejoiced in God's righteous judgment: that innocent men derided their incredulity.

Ver. 20. *Whereas our substance is not cut down; but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.*] Whereas we, who believe God's care and providence, are untouched in our estates; when the relics of those impious men are devoured by fire from heaven.

Ver. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*] Let me advise thee therefore (whom God hath not yet quite consumed) to join thyself to the society of the righteous, and to become like Noah: then be secure, and doubt not but by that means all happiness shall return to thee.

Ver. 22. *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*] Do not refuse the instruction which such men give thee from God, but heartily embrace it, and faithfully preserve it to be the rule of thy life.

Ver. 23. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.*] Thou shalt soon feel the comfortable fruits of it; for if thou return to the Almighty, who hath laid thee thus low, he will return to thee, and raise thee up as high as ever: he will pardon thine iniquity, and remove the punishment of it far from thee and thine.

Ver. 24. *Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.*] Thou shalt recover all thy losses with usury; and no more value gold than the dirt on which it shall lie, nor the purest gold more than the pebbles in the brook.

Ver. 25. *Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.*] Thou shalt be at no pains to secure thy vast heaps of gold and silver; because thy Almighty Restorer, who gave them to thee, will defend them better than the strongest fortress, and be himself thy treasure.

Ver. 26. *For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*] For then thou shalt be so far from doubting of his care over thee, that thou shalt delight to think how he loves thee: thou shalt not be dejected any more, but confidently and cheerfully expect his blessing on thee.

Ver. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.*] Thou shalt ask nothing of him but thou shalt obtain it; and have abundant cause to be continually giving thanks to him for his bounteous goodness in fulfilling thy desires.

Ver. 28. *Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways.*] Thou shalt accomplish whatsoever thou designest, and all thy undertakings shall be prosperous.

Ver. 29. *When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.*] Thou shalt pray to God also to lift up others who are in a low condition; and he shall grant thy petitions, by delivering him that is depressed.

Ver. 30. *He shall deliver the island of the innocent; and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.*] Yea, a whole country shall owe its safety to thy innocence: it shall be delivered by thy pious prayers and blameless actions.

CHAP. XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

To the foregoing discourse of Eliphaz, Job thought at first to make no answer, but only by complaints of their injustice, and fresh appeals to God: by whom he desires, more earnestly than ever, to be tried, being assured that he would acquit him. And though for the present God was not pleased to give him audience (of which he complains with too much passion), yet he maintains that hope, which began to appear in his soul, (in his last discourse with Bildad, chap. xix.) that God would at last clear him from all the aspersions which were cast upon him.

Ver. 1. *THEN Job answered and said.*] Then Job, hearing his person thus defamed, and his discourse perverted, renewed his complaints, and said,

Ver. 2. *Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*] Still my just defence of myself

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is judged to be rebellion against God: which renders my sufferings heavier than all my sighs and groans can express:

Ver. 3. *Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!*] And makes me once more appeal to God, and wish I could be admitted into his presence (so free from the conscience of any guilt), and approach even to his judgment-seat.

Ver. 4. *I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.*] I would set before him the justice of my cause, and fill my mouth with confutations of your false accusations.

Ver. 5. *I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.*] I would press to know his judgment of me, and diligently attend to the sentence which he would pass upon me.

Ver. 6. *Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.*] Do you think he would make no other use of his absolute power than to oppress me? I cannot believe it; he would rather employ it to support me;

Ver. 7. *There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*] Till at his bar I had proved myself a righteous person, and been perfectly acquitted by him my righteous judge.

Ver. 8. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him.*] But all these, alas! are vain wishes; but which way soever I turn myself, whether to the east or to the west, I cannot see him appear to do me right.

Ver. 9. *On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.*] He works and moves invisibly in all other quarters of the world; but I can discover nothing he does to clear my innocence.

Ver. 10. *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*] My only comfort is, that though I cannot know all his ways, yet he, being every where, knows the whole course of my life: and when he hath proved me by these afflictions, as gold is by the fire, I doubt not, I shall be cleared from these imputations which you lay upon me.

Ver. 11. *My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined.*] I am sure I have ever followed his guidance, and so steadfastly observed his commandments, that no temptation hath made me swerve from them.

Ver. 12. *Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*] I have prevented the advice you give me, (xxii. 22.) having never done otherwise than he bade me, and laid up his words more carefully than my necessary provision for this life.

Ver. 13. *But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*] But for the present this doth not at all move him to relieve me: he continues his purpose (whatever it be), and none can alter it, no more than they can hinder the fulfilling of it.

Ver. 14. *For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him.*] For what he hath resolved to inflict upon me, that I find he will accomplish: and many such things as these he doth, of which he will not give us the reason.

Ver. 15. *Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.*] This terrifies me when I reflect upon it, notwithstanding my innocence. I tremble at the thoughts of his absolute power and unsearchable wisdom, which may think fit still to continue these afflictions:

Ver. 16. *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*] Which by the weight of them have broken my spirit, and made me so timorous, that I cannot but dread the danger I am in of suffering more from his almighty hand.

Ver. 17. *Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.*] For still he keeps me alive under all these evils which I endure, and will not let me have the favour to die by that hand which strikes me so severely.

CHAP. XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Upon farther consideration, Job thought good again to confute their rash assertion, about the plagues which always befal the wicked, by an induction of particulars that prove the contrary. Among which the wild Arabs, he tells them, are a notorious instance; whose profession is rapine, and yet they thrive and prosper in it, (ver. 5, &c.) And so do the more civilized oppressors, of whom he says something before, and again ver. 11, 12. where he seems to reflect upon hard landlords, and griping merchants and traffickers in cities; to whom he adds murderers, adulterers, pirates, with several other wicked villains (in the conclusion of the chapter), who notwithstanding die like other men, and are not called to an account for their enormous crimes in this present world.

Ver. 1. *WHY, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?*] But to answer a little what you have so often asserted: if punishments from the Almighty be so apparent and visible upon the wicked, why do not they who are truly pious see the public and open judgments?

Ver. 2. *Some remove the land-marks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.*] Especially when the wickedness of some of them is so notorious, that they violate all known rights; seizing on the lands of their neighbours, taking away their cattle, and (not content with that) owning it when they have done, by putting them openly into their pastures?

Ver. 3. *They drive away the ass of the fatherless; they take the widow's ox for a pledge.*] If a poor fatherless child have an ass left him to carry his burdens, they drive it away on some pretence or other; and have no more mercy than to take of the widow, for the security of her debt, the only ox she hath wherewith to plough her ground.

Ver. 4. *They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.*] They offer abuses to helpless people upon the highway, so that the meaner sort dare not appear for fear of their insolence or their violence.

Ver. 5. *Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work, rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.*] And you shall see others of them, who (making pillage their trade) leave the cities and towns, and go to skulk in forests and desert

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places; where, becoming wild and savage, they live on rapine and spoil; in which they are so diligent, that those wildernesses (where they neither plough nor sow) maintain their families.

Ver. 6. *They reap every one his corn in the field; and they gather the vintage of the wicked.*] For they make inroads out of those woods into the neighbouring fields and vineyards, and thence wickedly carry away the corn and the grapes, never regarding who is the owner of them.

Ver. 7. *They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.*] They spare not the poor reapers and vintagers; but, stripping them to their very skin, leave them never a rag to defend them from the cold, when they go to rest after their wearisome labours.

Ver. 8. *They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.*] They are exposed (poor wretches!) to the injury of the weather, as they lie asleep at the foot of mountains: they have no whither to run, but into caves and holes of rocks; where they endeavour to shroud themselves, when they see a tempest coming.

Ver. 9. *They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.*] Nay, the persons of men are not safe from the violence of these outlaws; but they snatch away young children from their mothers' breasts, and carry away the poor (pretending they owe them something) to make them their slaves.

Ver. 10. *They cause them to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.*] Whom when they have stolen, they will not allow so much as clothes to cover their nakedness, nor let him that is ready to starve eat of the sheaf which he hath gleaned.

Ver. 11. *Which make oil within their walls, and tread their wine-presses, and suffer thirst.*] They cause these miserable creatures to press out their oil and their wine in their cellars; but let them not taste a drop, though they be ready to die with thirst.

Ver. 12. *Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out; yet, God layeth not folly to them.*] Whole cities groan under the oppression of some or other of these wicked men, and cry out like those that are dying of their wounds: and yet God, who knows all this, doth not make them examples of his displeasure, nor can we tell when he will punish them for their injustice and cruelty.

Ver. 13. *They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.*] The world would be very empty, if he should destroy all such persons; for besides these open there are more secret sinners, who look upon the light as their enemy: they dare not be seen in the day-time; or if they be espied, they presently seek to hide themselves, that they may not be discovered.

Ver. 14. *The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*] The murderer, for instance, rises before the sun, to kill those whose poverty calls them up to early labour; and then, lurking all day in the close thickets and woods, he turns robber, and rifles rich men's houses in the night.

Ver. 15. *The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face.*] The adulterer also, whose eye hath let an unlawful love into his heart, waits for the dusk of the evening to favour his lewd desire: then he hopes nobody he meets withal will know him; but lest they should, he wraps his face in his cloak to prevent discovery.

Ver. 16. *In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they know not the light.*] And when all are at rest, he will dig through the walls of houses, if there be no other way to come at the adulteress: the assignment was made between them in the day-time, and the place then marked out, at which he may most easily enter; but it is the night which brings them together to act the works of darkness.

Ver. 17. *For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one knew them, they are in the terrors of th shadow of death.*] These are their delight, and if they chance to sleep too long together, and the morning surprise them, they are ready to die with fear; if any one know them, they are in the very agonies of death.

Ver. 18. *He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.*] To this wicked crew you may add the pirate, who robs upon the sea, and runs from one little creek to another in swift ships: which bring him in so much riches, that he despises the employment of those who till the earth and plant vineyards, as poor and unprofitable.

Ver. 19. *Drought and heat consume the snow-waters; so doth the grave those which have sinned.*] And yet all these, after they have spent their life in such horrid villanies, do not die of lingering and tormenting diseases; but go down to the grave as easily as snow-water sinks into the dry ground when it is melted by the sun.

Ver. 20. *The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him: he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.*] God sets no such mark of his displeasure upon him, but that his mother may soon forget him: the hand of justice doth not hang him on a gibbet for the birds to feed on; but he is carried to his grave like other men, to be the sweet food of worms. There he lies quietly, and neither he nor his wickedness are any more remembered than a tree which is broken all to shivers.

Ver. 21. *He evil-entreateth the barren that beareth not, and doeth not good to the widow.*] This is true even of him who, to hide his villany, kills the child in the womb of her whom he hath deflowered; and when he hath abused a poor widow, makes her no satisfaction.

Ver. 22. *He draweth also the mighty with his power; he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.*] The greatest persons are not able to stand before him: when he rises up to assassinate, there is no man, be he never so strong, is sure of his life.

Ver. 23. *Though it be given him to be in safety wherein he resteth, yet his eyes are upon their ways.*] Though he give you his hand, and promise you security so solemnly, that you think you may rely upon him, yet he watches all occasions, and lies in wait secretly to do you mischief.

Ver. 24. *They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.*] Thus these impious men flourish, and are lifted up above all other; and then they depart the world without any punishment: they are laid down and shut up in their graves like all other men; nay, they die as easily (without those tedious pains

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which some endure) as the top of an ear of corn is cropped with your hand.

Ver. 25. *And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?*] All this I know to be so true, that I challenge all the world to disprove me: I am sure it is not in any man's power to shew that my discourse is frivolous.

CHAP. XXV.

ARGUMENT.

The foregoing discourse of Job, in the twenty-fourth chapter, was so undeniable, that Bildad begins to break off the dispute. For he says not a word to it, but only advises him to speak more reverently of the majesty of God, than he imagined he had done in his appeal to him, (chap. xxiii.)

Ver. 1. *THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said.*] Then Bildad (whose turn it was to speak), being unable to refute what Job had said, only desired him, in a few words, to beware how he reflected upon the justice of God, or imagined himself to be just if he examined him. The words were these:

Ver. 2. *Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places.*] Take heed what thou sayest of God, the Sovereign of the world, who ought to be worshipped by thee with the most awful reverence; as he is in the heavenly places, where they never rebel against his orders.

Ver. 3. *Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?*] Hath he not innumerable troops of angels, and other creatures, all ready to execute his pleasure? And where is the man that is out of the verge of his all-overspreading providence?

Ver. 4. *How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?*] Why then doth such a pitiful wretch as he talk of his righteousness before this glorious Majesty? He forgets sure the condition of his birth, who pretends to purity in his sight.

Ver. 5. *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.*] Let a man lift up his eyes as high as the moon; nay, look as far as the sun, and the stars of heaven, he shall find that they have their spots; nay, in his presence, have no lustre at all.

Ver. 6. *How much less man, that is a worm; and the son of man, which is a worm?*] What can be expected then from miserable man or his posterity; who, being full of corruption whilst they live, can be nothing but rottenness when they are dead?

CHAP. XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Job, hearing Bildad wander so far from the business, derides his grave affectation of wisdom; and tells him, that though he talked as if he thought himself fit to be a coadjutor to God Almighty, yet, as his discourse was impertinent, so it was but mean and flat, in comparison with what he was able to speak himself, concerning the omnipotent wisdom of God: which he sets forth in a far more lively manner.

Ver. 1. *BUT Job answered and said.*] To this Job replied almost as briefly; saying,

Ver. 2. *How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?*] O wonderful advocate! how excellently hast thou defended him who hath no need of thy help! dost thou think to do the Almighty any service by such discourses?

Ver. 3. *How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?*] What admirable advice wouldest thou give him in his government of the world, if he would admit thee to be his counsellor, who imaginest, no doubt, thou aboundest with wisdom, and hast hit the very mark!

Ver. 4. *To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?*] Dost thou think me ignorant of such things as these? or canst thou pretend to any extraordinary inspiration concerning them?

Ver. 5. *Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.*] I know as well as thou canst inform me the power of God; which appears, not only in the heavens (to which thou biddest me look), but even in the lowest parts of the earth: where vast giant-like creatures are formed under the water, whose inhabitants are innumerable.

Ver. 6. *Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*] Nor is his knowledge, I am sensible, less than his power; but penetrates into the greatest depths: the very dead, who are quite removed out of our sight, being perfectly visible unto him.

Ver. 7. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*] Who by his wonderful power and wisdom stretches out the whole world from the one pole to the other, which he alone sustains; as he doth this globe of earth hanging in the air, without any thing to support it.

Ver. 8. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.*] It is he who binds up the fluid waters, as it were in bags, and keeps them a long time hanging in the clouds: through which they do not burst all at once, but distil by drops to moisten the earth in due season.

Ver. 9. *He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.*] These clouds he spreads before the glorious face of heaven, to restrain the beams of the sun from scorching the earth.

Ver. 10. *He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.*] He hath enclosed the waters of the sea in shores; and so exactly compassed them about, that as long as the world lasts they shall not be able (be they never so furious) to exceed those bounds, but shall break all their rage against them into froth.

Ver. 11. *The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.*] And yet the highest mountains, which look as if they were the pillars and supporters of the heavens, quake and tremble, when he thunders and lightens upon them.

Ver. 12. *He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.*] By his power he raises a tempest, which makes great furrows in the sea, and divideth, as it were, one part of it from another: and (such is his wisdom) he knows how to appease it again, and depress its proud waves into the deadest calm.

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Ver. 13. *By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*] Finally, by his wise contrivance the heavens were adorned, and made thus beautiful, as we behold them: his power made the milky way (and other celestial signs), whose windings are so admirable.

Ver. 14. *Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?*] And yet these are but very small parcels of his works: for, alas! it is very little that such as we can comprehend of him; but the utmost force of his power is past all understanding.

CHAP. XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

As Bildad began to decline the dispute, so Zophar quite gives it over: either looking upon Job as incurably obstinate, or (as we might more charitably conceive, were it not for what we read xxxii. 1.) being convinced he had more reason on his side. Whose silence so raised the spirit of Job, that he now triumphs over his opponents: as the word *mashal*, which we render *parable*, may denote. For it signifies among the Hebrews an elegant ingenious kind of speech; excelling, and, as it were, domineering over all other, in its pithiness, or neatness, or some other rare quality. Such is the following discourse of Job, which begins (in this chapter) with a vehement protestation that he would never desert his plea; nor yield to their doctrine, that a remarkable vengeance always attends upon wickedness in this world: though he grants, and largely here asserts, that sometimes there doth.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, Job continued his parable, and said.*] After Job had made some pause, and Zophar (whose turn it was now to speak) had nothing at all to reply, he proceeded with greater eloquence than ever to assert his innocence; saying,

Ver. 2. *As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul.*] I protest by the eternal God, who, for the present, will not judge my cause; by the omnipotent Lord of the world, who hath loaded me with so many afflictions, that they have taken away all the pleasure of life from me:

Ver. 3. *All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.*] I protest, I say, that as long as I have breath in my body, and he shall enable me to speak a word,

Ver. 4. *My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.*] My tongue shall be the faithful interpreter of mine heart, and I will never speak otherways than I think.

Ver. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.*] Therefore never hope I will yield to your opinion, which I know to be false: no, I abhor the thought of it, and will sooner die than confess the guilt you charge me withal.

Ver. 6. *My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*] You shall never extort that from me, but I will resolutely maintain my righteousness, and not be persuaded by any reasons to desert its defence: my conscience doth not hitherto accuse me, and it shall never upbraid me hereafter, for betraying mine innocence.

Ver. 7. *Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*] And let me tell you, he that sets himself against me, and would have me thought wicked, shall be found so himself in the end: I say again, he shall prove himself unrighteous sooner than me;

Ver. 8. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*] Who knows very well it is madness for a man to counterfeit piety when he hath none: for though he may get riches by that pretence while he lives, yet what hope hath he when he dies?

Ver. 9. *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?*] Nay, before that, when any calamity comes upon him, will God give any regard to the cries of one who regarded him so little?

Ver. 10. *Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?*] Or will he himself have the confidence to go to God, and expect any comfort from him? will he not rather despond in such a case, and cease to call upon him?

Ver. 11. *I will teach you by the hand of God; that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.*] Do not disdain to learn of me, and I will make you understand what God doth with the wicked; and discover to you some of the secrets of his Almighty providence.

Ver. 12. *Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?*] Behold, there is not one of you but hath by his own experience found what I am about to say to be certainly true; and yet, such is your vanity, you will defend an ungrounded opinion.

Ver. 13. *This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.*] I grant that a wicked man (but not all wicked men, as you maintain) doth sometimes receive such punishment from God as he deserves: which might make other tyrannical oppressors fear to meet with the same vengeance.

Ver. 14. *If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword; and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.*] We have seen, for instance, his numerous posterity fall by the sword of justice or war, or by the fury of a popular tumult: and they who escaped, were reserved to perish with cruel hunger;

Ver. 15. *Those that remain of him shall be buried in death; and his widows shall not weep.*] Or else with such pestilential diseases, that none would adventure to bury them, nor did their widows survive to lament them.

Ver. 16. *Though he heapeth up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay.*] So that if he have treasured up such heaps of riches, that he values silver no more than dust, nor costly apparel and furniture than the mire of the street;

Ver. 17. *He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*] He shall have only the trouble of gathering them together, but none of his shall enjoy them: God shall translate all these treasures to another family, who shall do more good with them.

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Ver. 18. *He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh.*] He builds a goodly fabric, out of which he is as easily shaken as a moth out of a garment: and it shall not be more durable than the booth, which is made for him that keeps the fruits of a garden.

Ver. 19. *The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.*] And when he dieth, he shall have no monument made for him: nay, while he lives it so falls out, that he looks about him, and sees that every body hath deserted him.

Ver. 20. *Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.*] Innumerable terrors then break in upon him, and surprise him like an inundation of waters; the Divine vengeance, like a violent tempest, unexpectedly hurries him away.

Ver. 21. *The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place.*] Some pestilent vapour blasts him irrecoverably; and as certainly kills him, as a whirlwind hurls things out of their place.

Ver. 22. *For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand.*] Or God shall send some other mischiefs so fast upon him (without any pity to him, who had none for others), that all the attempts shall be in vain which he makes to escape the vengeance.

Ver. 23. *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.*] At which the beholders shall rejoice, and applaud God's righteous judgment (which I confess he sometimes executes): they shall hiss at his name when he is dead, in that very place where he hath been so much magnified.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The connexion of this chapter with the foregoing, I hope I have truly expressed in the first verse. And that being found, it is not difficult to see at what it drives; *viz.* to stop the busy inquiry of mankind, who are very wise, he shews, in other things, but have not wit enough to comprehend the reasons why God doth not inflict those punishments upon all wicked men which fall upon some. It is not needful to set down here how this argument is managed (with such admirable elegance of words, and such weightiness of matter, as make it deserve the name of *mashal, parable,* or *proverb),* because it will sufficiently appear in the paraphrase.

Ver. 1. *SURELY there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.*] You would have me give a reason, perhaps, why God punishes some wicked men and not all: but the wit and industry of mankind, which have discovered mines of silver and gold, must not think to find out this secret, which God hath reserved to himself.

Ver. 2. *Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.*] They invent means to extract iron and brass out of the earth and out of stone.

Ver. 3. *He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection; the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.*] There is no mine so dismally dark, but there some man or other sets things in order for his work; he searches to the very bottom of it, and finds out those stones which lie in the most abstruse and hidden parts of the earth.

Ver. 4. *The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.*] A flood breaks out from some neighbouring place, and disturbs the miners (for the waters seem as if they would stagnate there, and never stir a foot): but by the hard labour of man they are drained, and leave the place dry again.

Ver. 5. *As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire.*] Out of the surface of the earth he gets herbs and corn for his food and sustenance, and underneath it he finds lime and brimstone, and such-like fiery stuff for other uses.

Ver. 6. *The stones of it are the place of sapphires; and it hath dust of gold.*] He goes into countries whose stones are the place where sapphires are lodged, and whose dust to him is as good as gold.

Ver. 7. *There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.*] He treads in paths which no bird of prey knoweth, which the most quick-sighted among them hath never seen.

Ver. 8. *The lion's whelps have not trodden it; nor the fierce lion passed by it.*] Where the wildest beasts, who search for solitary places, never made their den, or so much as approached, no, not the ravenous lions, whose hunger leads them every where to seek satisfaction.

Ver. 9. *He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.*] He digs through the hardest rocks by his obstinate labour, and undermines mountains, that he may find the treasure hid in their bowels.

Ver. 10. *He cutteth out rivers among the rocks, and his eye seeth every precious thing.*] And if he meet with waters which hinder his work, he cuts a channel through the rock to convey them away, and never rests till he hath discovered every thing that may requite his indefatigable pains.

Ver. 11. *He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.*] Nay, more than this, he stops the course of rivers, and leaves not a drop remaining, that he may bring to light all that is hidden in the bottom of them.

Ver. 12. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?*] But though he be so successful in these searches, he must not think to comprehend the reasons of wise Providence. He may study as long as he pleases, and weary himself with busy inquiries, but never be able with all his labour to dive into the bottom of this secret, why God doth not punish all the wicked who so insolently contemn him.

Ver. 13. *Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.*] Alas! this wisdom is not to be purchased with all that wretched man hath to give for it: it is not a thing that any part of this world affords.

Ver. 14. *The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me.*] The miners, poor souls, dig they never so deep, are never like to come within the reach of it; nor is it to be fetched by the mariner from any of those countries to which he sails.

Ver. 15. *It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*] All the gold and silver which men have heaped up by such long toil and labour, are too inconsiderable a price to be offered for it.

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Ver. 16. *It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.*] Though it be the purest gold which comes from Ophir, together with all the precious stones wherewith that rich country abounds, they are of so little value,

Ver. 17. *The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.*] That if you should add the gold and the crystal which are brought from other places, with all the vessels made by the art of man of the most refined and massy gold, they could do nothing to obtain it.

Ver. 18. *No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.*] The precious stones which are fetched out of the mountains of the east are not worthy to be named with it: men may dive into the sea, and fetch up pearls, but this wisdom lies a great deal deeper.

Ver. 19. *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.*] The Arabian topaz, which is so much esteemed for its wonderful lustre, doth not come near it; nor are all the golden ornaments, which they wear in those parts, proportionable to it.

Ver. 20. *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?*] By what means then shall we get this wisdom of which we are desirous? Who can shew us where it lies, that we may go and search for it?

Ver. 21. *Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.*] We may ask this question as often as we please, but none can resolve us; for it is concealed from all men living; the most soaring wits were never able to disclose it.

Ver. 22. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*] Death is the best informer, and the grave the only place where we may learn something of it. But this is all that they can tell us (which is as far short of a full account as a rumour is from a certain knowledge), that they will shortly make all men equal, and then it will be of no great moment, whether we have been happy or miserable.

Ver. 23. *God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.*] None but God understands the way and method of his own providence: he alone knows the place of that wisdom we inquire after, which is no where else but in his own mind.

Ver. 24. *For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven.*] For, who should govern the world but he, whose understanding is infinite, and sees the motions of all creatures, from one end of it to the other?

Ver. 25. *To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.*] Which he hath set in such exact order, and given to them such just measures, that the wind cannot blow, nor the water flow, but in those proportions which he hath prescribed.

Ver. 26. *When he had made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.*] To the like laws he hath bound the rain, and appointed the course which the thundering cloud shall take.

Ver. 27. *Then did he see it, and declare; it he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.*] And when he ordered all these things, he was pleased in the wisdom which he saw in his works; he made it visible and apparent; he fixed it therefore, and made these laws perpetual; because, after all the search that could be made, he found no fault in it.

Ver. 28. *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*] And making man at the same time, he imprinted this sense upon his heart, that he ought to be an humble adorer, not a censurer, of his secret wisdom, whereby he governs the world. For the highest wisdom and skill that man can attain, is to be possessed with such a religious fear of the great Lord of all, as not to dare to do any thing which he knows will displease him.

CHAP. XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

To such discourses as these, Job presumes his friends would have given greater attention than it seems they did, had not the vileness of his present condition made his speeches also contemptible. And therefore he puts them in mind with what reverence all his orations were formerly received, by great and small; wishing God would restore to him those happy days: and inserting all along so remarkable instances of his integrity (especially as a judge), in the height of his princely prosperity, when he had an uncontrollable power to do as he pleased, and yet not abused it; but employed it constantly for the defence and comfort of the meanest people in his province.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, Job continued his parable, and said.*] Here Job made another pause, to see if his friends would return any answer: but they continuing silent, he proceeded in his eloquent vindication of himself, saying,

Ver. 2. *Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me.*] Oh that God would re-establish me in that happy condition, wherein, some time ago, I was a principal part of his care! you would then give a greater regard to my words than you do now in my misfortune:

Ver. 3. *When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness.*] Which hath left me nothing but only wishes, that he would restore me those pleasant days when I saw nothing but continued tokens of his favour, by which I passed untouched through all the inconveniences and troubles of this life.

Ver. 4. *As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.*] Oh, the flourishing season of that prosperous estate! would it were possible to recal the felicity of those days, when the Divine Providence treated me so kindly, that all my answers were held for oracles:

Ver. 5. *When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.*] When the Almighty Goodness had not ceased to be gracious to me; but I saw myself surrounded with my children and servants, waiting to know my pleasure:

Ver. 6. *When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil.*] When my lands were so fertile, and were blessed with such plenty, as if the rivers had flowed with butter and oil:

Ver. 7. *When I went out to the gate through the city; when I prepared my seat in the street!*] When I went in state to the court of judgment, and sat on the bench in the open

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place, where the people are wont to have their causes heard:

Ver. 8. *The young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up.*] And the youth, seeing me appear, were seized with such fear, that they durst not look me in the face; and the aged no sooner perceived me, but they rose up from their seats, and, in token of reverence, stood in my presence.

Ver. 9. *The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.*] Immediately ensued a general silence, the princes themselves breaking off their discourses, and not taking the liberty to speak a word.

Ver. 10. *The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.*] The nobles and great commanders could not have heard me with greater attention and stillness, if they had quite lost their voices, or their tongues had been tied to the roof of their mouths.

Ver. 11. *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.*] And (so far was I from being a tyrant, as you have accused me, xxii. 5, 6.) there was no ear heard the sentence I gave but prized my integrity; no eye saw me after I had spoken, but you might have beheld therein the respect and honour which they all bare me.

Ver. 12. *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and such as had none to help him.*] Because I never failed to ease the poor when he complained of his oppressions; the fatherless, and such as had none to take their parts, ever found me their defender.

Ver. 13. *The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*] I had his prayer for my prosperity, whose life and estate I preserved when he was in danger of utter undoing: and I made the sorrowful widow such a joyful woman, that she openly proclaimed my praise.

Ver. 14. *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.*] For in the morning I put on a resolution to do justly, together with my clothes, and I never swerved from it all the day after: but looked upon the righteous sentence which I pronounced as a greater ornament than the purple robe on my shoulder, and the diadem upon my head.

Ver. 15. *I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.*] I instructed him who did not well understand his own business, and assisted him who wanted means to carry on his cause.

Ver. 16. *I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out.*] For the poor I had such a paternal affection, that it made me his advocate as well as his judge: and I never left studying his cause (when there was an obscurity in it) till I had cleared the business, and done him right.

Ver. 17. *And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.*] By which means I disabled the unjust to oppress them, and forced them to restore that which they had violently extorted from them.

Ver. 18. *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.*] And having done so many virtuous actions, and being in such high authority, I was apt to promise myself, that, after an exceeding long and happy life, I should die quietly in mine own house among my children and friends.

Ver. 19. *My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.*] For, being like a tree, whose root spreadeth out itself by the waters, and whose boughs are perpetually moistened by the sweet dew of heaven, I thought I should never wither.

Ver. 20. *My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.*] My esteem and reputation increased every day, and grew greater; and so did my power, to defend the authority and dignity I had obtained.

Ver. 21. *Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.*] Though there was no need I should so employ it; for when I spake all men gave me the greatest attention, and my words were a law to them.

Ver. 22. *After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.*] Which, when I had uttered, no man contradicted, or so much as corrected, but it sweetly instilled itself, and sunk into their hearts.

Ver. 23. *And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouths wide as for the latter rain.*] For they expected my opinion with the same eager desire that the husbandman doth the showers, after he hath sown his seed; they gaped for it as the thirsty earth doth for the latter rain, to plump the corn.

Ver. 24. *If I laughed on them, they believed it not: and the light of my countenance they cast not down.*] The reverence they bare me was so great, that when I laid aside my gravity, and jested with them, they would not believe it, but still took all I said to be serious; and whatsoever pleasantness I used with them, it did not diminish my authority among them.

Ver. 25. *I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.*] But if I went to visit them, they still preserved their respect to me, and gave me the pre-eminence. And, as my condescension to them did not make them less honour me, so their submission to me did not make me less familiar with them; for when I sat as a king, guarded with many troops of followers, I comforted the meanest, and would not suffer them to be dejected.

CHAP. XXX.

ARGUMENT.

From the foregoing account of his ancient splendour, he takes occasion to annex a no-less-elegant description of the vileness of his present condition. Hoping that the consideration of such a prodigious change (which he represents in several particulars, and not without some touches still upon his integrity), might at last move his hard-hearted friends to some compassion towards him; especially, when they saw how near he was to his grave, notwithstanding all his prayers to God for relief.

Ver. 1. *BUT now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.*] But now, alas! there is so sad an alteration, that the youths, who durst not look me in the face, have the confidence to mock and jeer me; even those youths, whose fathers were so mean, that I disdained to employ them in the vilest service.

Ver. 2. *Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?*] Men whom, if I

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had had a mind to employ, were fit for nothing; being so lazy, listless, and unable to do any business, that it was in vain to call them to it.

Ver. 3. *For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.*] Beggarly fellows, who, being ready to starve, were ashamed to be seen; and sneaked into desert places to hide their poverty: it is but yesterday that they were most wretchedly miserable;

Ver. 4. *Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for their meat.*] Satisfying their hunger with those unsavoury herbs, which they cut up in the salt marshes; and having no other bread but the roots of juniper-trees.

Ver. 5. *They were driven forth from among men (they cried after them as after a thief).*] They were driven from the society of men; and, if ever they appeared, an outcry was raised against them, as there is against a thief when he is discovered.

Ver. 6. *To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.*] They had no other habitation, but the clefts which the brooks sometimes make in the valleys; or the caves which they found in other parts of the earth, or in the rocks.

Ver. 7. *Among the bushes they brayed, under the nettles they were gathered together.*] Their sighs might be heard, like the braying of asses, among the thorn-bushes; they lurked together under nettles or thistles:

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; they were viler than the earth.*] Being lewd villains, the children of obscure parents; viler than the earth upon which they trod.

Ver. 9. *And I now am their song; yea, I am their by-word.*] And I now am become their pastime: they have made songs of my calamity; and it is the common entertainment to discourse of my misery.

Ver. 10. *They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*] They express an abhorrence of me; and, as vile as they are, will not come near me; or if they do, it is only to shew their extreme contempt of me.

Ver. 11. *Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.*] God, they see, hath scattered all my estate, and, by sore afflictions, laid me very low; which hath made them forget all respect to me, and take an unrestrained licence in their insolent behaviour towards me.

Ver. 12. *Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.*] They set up the very boys to accuse me; they push me down, and then trample on me. I am become the beaten path, as I may call myself, of their pernicious reproaches.

Ver. 13. *They mar my path; they set forward my calamity; they have no helper.*] They so disturb my thoughts, that I know not what course to take in this miserable condition: which they heighten by their calumnies; and are so fruitful in them, that they need none to help to invent them.

Ver. 14. *They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.*] They assault me with such a fury as soldiers do their enemies, when they have made a wide breach in the wall of a besieged city, and pour in all their forces to destroy them.

Ver. 15. *Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind; and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.*] This dismal change hath fearfully astonished me; to see all my wishes and hopes dispersed like the wind, and all the happiness I possessed passed away as swiftly as a cloud.

Ver. 16. *And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*] I can do nothing now but melt into tears; my very soul is ready to faint away with grief, when I think how those joyful days are gone, and what distresses have seized on me, and come to take their place.

Ver. 17. *My bones are pierced in me in the night-season; and my sinews take no rest.*] In the night (when sleep is wont to bury our grief) I feel such sharp pains, as penetrate through my very bones; my blood boils so violently in my veins, that I can take no rest.

Ver. 18. *By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.*] It requires a great deal of strength, when I would shift my clothes, to pull them off; my outward garment, by the filthy matter of my sores, being glued as fast to me, as the collar of my shirt.

Ver. 19. *He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.*] I look as if I had been thrown into the dirt: there is little difference between me and dust and ashes.

Ver. 20. *I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me; I stand up, and thou regardest me not.*] And, which is saddest of all, I call upon thee, O God, but cannot prevail with thee to relieve me: I continue praying and waiting for thy help, and thou sufficiently understandest my miserable case.

Ver. 21. *Thou art become cruel to me; with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.*] But thy former kindness to me is turned into such severity, that it looks like cruelty: thou hast given me such deadly blows, as if thou hatedst me.

Ver. 22. *Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.*] Thou didst lift me up on high, and madest me, as it were, to ride upon the clouds: but hast thrown me down with so much the sorer fall, which hath broken me all in pieces.

Ver. 23. *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*] So that I can think of nothing but dying, and going to my grave; the common sanctuary of all mankind.

Ver. 24. *Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.*] Whither thy afflicting hand will not pursue me: for, though men cry when they are sent thither, yet when they are there, all their sufferings and complaints are ended.

Ver. 25. *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?*] Strange that I should be thus punished without any mercy! was I wont to be so unmerciful to others? No, I never looked upon men under any hardship without tears; and was so sensibly touched with the miseries of the poor, that I ever relieved them.

Ver. 26. *When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness.*] Which gave me good hope that I should be very happy: but, instead thereof, the saddest afflictions and troubles are befallen me.

Ver. 27. *My bowels boiled, and rested not; the days of affliction prevented me.*] Which have so suddenly surprised

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me, that they have put me into the greatest commotion and disorder: my bowels boil without the least intermission.

Ver. 28. *I went mourning without the sun; I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.*] My affliction is so constant, without any glimpse of joy, that I am a perpetual mourner; and am not able to lie still, nor to refrain from shrieks and cries in the greatest assemblies.

Ver. 29. *I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.*] I can do nothing but lament myself, as if I were one of those mournful creatures which make such doleful noises in desert places.

Ver. 30. *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burnt with heat.*] The boiling heat of my body hath so parched me, that my skin looks black; and the marrow in my bones, and all my vital moisture, is dried up.

Ver. 31. *My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*] And, to say no more, all mirth is banished my house, the musical instruments are laid aside, and nothing but mourning and weeping come in their room.

CHAP. XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

It was possible his friends might make quite another use than Job intended of the relation he had made of his miserable condition, in the chapter foregoing: and therefore, lest it should harden them in their old error, and they should take what he had said to be an argument of his guilt, he gives in this chapter a large and particular account of his integrity, which in general he had so often asserted; laying his very soul, and the most secret inclinations of it open before them; together with the actions of his whole life, in his private capacity, (for of his public he had spoken before, chap. xxix.) both in respect of his neighbours, of all sorts, and in respect of God; to whom he again most solemnly appeals, in the conclusion of this discourse, that he did not boast of more virtues than he had; but would most gladly be tried before him, by some impartial judge. I need not here enumerate his virtues, because they are plainly and distinctly expressed in the paraphrase; and I do not pretend to give the entire contents, but the design only, of each chapter.

Ver. 1. *I MADE a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*] But do not, I beseech you, any longer look upon these sufferings as an argument that I am not innocent; for I protest to you, I have been very resolute, and careful to avoid even the occasions of lasciviousness: and therefore how should I ever so much as deliberate to corrupt a virgin?

Ver. 2. *For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?*] For I know there is a God in heaven, an Almighty Being, who rules over all: and what could I expect from him, as the reward of such impurity?

Ver. 3. *Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?*] Doth it not lead to destruction? nay, do not strange and horrible punishments fall upon the workers of that iniquity?

Ver. 4. *Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?*] Is it possible to commit it so secretly that it shall not be known by him, who observes every motion, and tells every step I take?

Ver. 5. *If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit.*] If I have broke my promises, or have been forward to deceive and cheat my neighbour;

Ver. 6. *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.*] I refuse not to be tried: but rather desire my actions may be scrupulously weighed and examined; for God, I am sure, will approve of my upright dealing.

Ver. 7. *If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.*] If I have turned aside from the rules of justice for fear or favour; if I have coveted the goods of other men, or my hands have taken any bribes:

Ver. 8. *Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.*] Let me be served in my kind, and let other men eat the corn which I have sowed, and pluck up the trees (roots and all) which I have planted.

Ver. 9. *If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door.*] If my heart hath been seduced to filthy desires after another man's wife; if I have watched for his absence, or some fair opportunity to enter into his house and defile his bed;

Ver. 10. *Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.*] Then let others take away my wife from me, and make her the vilest slave, whom they may use at their pleasure.

Ver. 11. *For this is a heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.*] I ever thought this a crime of the highest nature, an iniquity to be corrected by the severity of the public justice.

Ver. 12. *For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.*] For it is a fire, which, if it be not extinguished, consumes men and their estates; yea, destroys whole families and kingdoms; and so incenses the Divine displeasure, that, should it escape the magistrates' punishment, I could never hope that any thing of mine (were I guilty of it) should thrive, but all come to utter ruin.

Ver. 13. *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me.*] So far was I from doing such foul injuries to my neighbours, that I never extended my power to the oppression of my slaves: but was content to wave the privilege the law gave me, of using them as I pleased; and to allow them a fair hearing when they had any difference with me.

Ver. 14. *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?*] For I thought with myself, that though men could not punish me for my rigour towards them, yet I should never be able to excuse it to God when he came to judge me; nor tell what to answer when he called me to an account for my ill usage of them.

Ver. 15. *Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*] I often also called to mind that there was no such a difference in our estates as there was an equality in our births: and that we having one common Creator, my slave was as nearly related to God as myself.

Ver. 16. *If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail.*] Nor have the

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poor any reason to complain of me: for if I ever denied to satisfy their desire, or let the widow in vain expect my relief;

Ver. 17. *Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof.*] Or have sitten down at my table alone, without the company of fatherless children:

Ver. 18. *(For from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb).*] (For whom I have always had a natural compassion from my very youth; I brought it into the world with me, and it hath been my companion ever since:)

Ver. 19. *If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering.*] If I have suffered any to perish for want of clothing, or let the poor go naked without a covering;

Ver. 20. *If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.*] If his loins did not admonish him to bless me as oft as he girded on his garment, and he were not kept warm with the cloth made of my wool:

Ver. 21. *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate.*] If I ever have beaten the fatherless, because I knew I should be too strong for him in the court, in case he complained there of the injustice;

Ver. 22. *Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.*] Then let that guilty arm fall off from my shoulder, or be broken in two in the midst.

Ver. 23. *For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.*] For I never thought I could escape the Divine vengeance; the dread of which affrighted me, when men could not, from all such insolence; for I knew I could not support myself against his majesty:

Ver. 24. *If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.*] Whose favour I do not desire, if I have put my trust in riches, and thought myself safe and secure, because I was furnished with the noblest treasures:

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much.*] Or, if I was vainly elevated and puffed up with the large possessions left me by my ancestors, or with the great increase I had made to them by my own industry.

Ver. 26. *If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness.*] If when I beheld the sun arise, or the moon appear in her full lustre,

Ver. 27. *And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand.*] I ever entertained an opinion in my mind that they were gods, or kissed my hand in token of worship and reverence to them:

Ver. 28. *This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.*] This also were a fearful crime, which God's vicegerents should punish; because it were to put those stars in the place of him who is above all heavens.

Ver. 29. *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him.*] Whom I do not wish to be my friend, if I ever was glad at the ruin of mine enemy, or insulted over him, when any mischief befel him:

Ver. 30. *(Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul).*] (No, I was not so much as guilty of making any imprecations against him, nor was provoked by his malice to wish him dead:)

Ver. 31. *If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.*] Though the people of my family were so enraged at him, that, if I would have yielded to their passion, they were ready to eat him up with an insatiable anger:

Ver. 32. *(The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller).*] (Much less was I guilty of unkindness to strangers, whom I never suffered to lodge in the streets: for the door of my house stood open, that any traveller might turn in there if he pleased:)

Ver. 33. *If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.*] If I have studied to seem better than I am, and have not now made a free confession; but, like our first parent, have concealed or excused my faults, and out of self-love have hidden mine iniquity:

Ver. 34. *(Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?*] (Because I dread what the people will say of me, or am terrified by the contempt into which the knowledge of my guilt may bring me with the neighbouring families: then I am content my mouth should be stopped, and that I never stir out of my door any more.

Ver. 35. *Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.*] Oh that the truth of all this might be examined by some equal judge! Behold, I continue still to desire of God this favour; and let him that can accuse me, bring in his libel in writing against me.

Ver. 36. *Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.*] Surely I would not endeavour to obscure it, but openly expose it to be read by all; nay, wear it as a singular ornament, which would turn to my honour, when the world saw it disproved.

Ver. 37. *I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.)*] I myself would assist him to draw up his charge, by declaring to him freely every action of my life: I would approach him as undauntedly as a prince, who is assured of the goodness of his cause:)

Ver. 38. *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain.*] For if so much as a bit of my land was unjustly gotten, or I have defrauded those who ploughed it of their wages;

Ver. 39. *If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life.*] If I have taken the fruits of it from my tenants, and paid nothing for them; or let them such hard bargains, that it broke their heart:

Ver. 40. *Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.*] Then let corn never grow there any more; but let it be overrun with thistles and the most stinking weeds.

Here Job ended his defence.

CHAP. XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

It appears by the fifteenth verse of this chapter, that there were several other persons present besides those that

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are named, when this dispute was held between Job and his three friends. Among whom there was a young man named Elihu; and who was either a Syrian (in which language this book was first written, and translated by Moses into Hebrew, says the author of the commentaries under Origen's name), descended from the second son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 20. or an Idumean, of the same country with Eliphaz the Temanite, Jer. xxv. 23. I have made him a Syrian in my paraphrase, because he is said to be of the kindred of Ram; by whom we are to understand either Aram, or, as the Hebrews think, Abraham, by whom such wisdom and piety might be promoted in his brother's family, as is apparent in Elihu; who, though much inferior to the rest in years (for which reason he had held his peace thus long), yet was much superior to them in knowledge. Which he discovers in the judicious censures he here passes, not only upon the three friends, but upon Job himself: whom he hath nothing to charge withal, relating to any crime committed before this affliction befel him; but thinks he had not managed the dispute about it with so much calmness and submission to God, as became his piety. In this he differs from those that spake before him: for I do not find that he blames him for any miscarriages, but those only which he observed in the heat of his disputation; and he spends his time rather in justifying God, than in carping at Job, as the other had done.

Ver. 1. *So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.*] And his three friends also left off disputing with him, because they saw him immoveably fixed in the opinion of his innocence.

Ver. 2. *Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram; against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*] Which very much displeased a young man, who had stood by all this time, and heard what both sides said for themselves. His name was Elihu, descended from a brother of Abraham; who was exceeding angry with Job, because he spent more time in justifying himself than in justifying God;

Ver. 3. *Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.*] And with his three friends also, because they were not able to maintain their charge against Job, and yet had condemned him to be a wicked hypocrite.

Ver. 4. *Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.*] Yet he moderated his passion so discreetly, that he said not a word, till he had waited, as well as Job, to see whether they would resume the debate: because it was not fit, he thought, for him to meddle, as long as his elders had any thing to say.

Ver. 5. *When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.*] But when he saw that none of the three offered to reply, but sat as men that knew not what to say, he was not able to hold his peace any longer:

Ver. 6. *And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.*] But in this manner addressed himself unto them, saying, I have considered all this while mine own youth, and your aged experience; which have deterred me so much, that I have hitherto been afraid to interpose my opinion.

Ver. 7. *I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years shall teach wisdom.*] I thought with myself, that it was becoming one of my small standing to hear, rather than to speak; and to learn wisdom in such grave company as yours, rather than pretend to teach it.

Ver. 8. *But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*] But I see I was mistaken: man is a very wretched thing, though he live never so long, if God do not illuminate him. It is the Divine inspiration which gives understanding.

Ver. 9. *Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment.*] They are not always the wisest who are in authority, and the teachers of others: nor do old men always so well employ their years as to understand the difference of things.

Ver. 10. *Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.*] Therefore let me entreat you to lend your ears a little to me: I also will tell you what I think about this matter.

Ver. 11. *Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst you searched out what to say.*] Do not think me too forward; for I have with great patience heard all your discourses, and observed your arguments; and let you proceed till you have searched as far as you could into the business:

Ver. 12. *Yea, I attended unto you; and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words.*] And having duly considered and comprehended every word, I must needs pronounce, that there is none of you hath confuted Job, nor said any thing to the purpose in answer to his defence of himself.

Ver. 13. *Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.*] For it is not sufficient for you to say he is obstinate, and therefore it is wisely done of us to leave him to God: he shall confound him, by continuing his affliction; not we by our arguments.

Ver. 14. *Now, he hath not directed his words against me; neither will I answer him with your speeches.*] Which truly are so weak, that I shall make no use of them; but, as Job hath directed none of his words against me, so I shall trouble him with none of your replies.

Ver. 15. *They were amazed; they answered no more; they left off speaking.*] See, I beseech you all, you that hear us, how these disputants are amazed; how silent they are, as if their speech had forsaken them.

Ver. 16. *When I had waited (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more).*] You are my witnesses, that I have waited for satisfaction: but after long expectation they bring forth nothing; they are at a stand, and furnished with no further answer.

Ver. 17. *I said, I will answer also my part; I also will shew mine opinion.*] Which made me resolve within myself, that I would have a share in this dispute; and shew, as I have often told you, what my opinion is concerning it.

Ver. 18. *For I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me.*] And indeed it is high time; for I am so full, by long thinking of what I have to say, that I am in pain till I have uttered my mind.

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Ver. 19. *Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.*] My thoughts work within me, like new wine in a vessel: and we are both alike in danger to burst, unless there be a vent.

Ver. 20. *I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips, and answer.*] I must speak, therefore, if it be but to ease myself: I will open my lips, as they do such vessels, and make an answer, because I cannot with safety hold my peace any longer.

Ver. 21. *Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man.*] And, I beseech you, let me speak with all freedom; with regard only to the cause, and not to the person: and do not expect that I should compliment, and give to man any glorious titles.

Ver. 22. *For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away.*] For I do not understand that art of soothing men into a great opinion of themselves: or if I did, I should not venture to use it; lest he that made me should presently stop my mouth for not dealing plainly.

CHAP. XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Here Elihu addresses his speech to Job alone (for he rejected all that the three friends had said, as sufficiently confuted by Job in his dispute with them), and tells him, first, that he was the man who would now plead with him in God's behalf (as he had often desired), and that he was no equal match for him. And then begins to reprehend those passages which he thought were blamable in Job's speeches; particularly his insisting so much upon his integrity: which, though true, should not have been mentioned without due acknowledgment, that the Sovereign of the world had done him no wrong in thus afflicting him; and that it was not fit for him to question the wisdom and justice of God's providence, because he did not understand it. For the care of God over man, and his kindness to him, he shews, are so apparent, upon so many scores, that they ought not to be denied because of the unaccountable afflictions that may befal us; which we ought rather to think are one of the ways whereby he doth man good.

Ver. 1. *WHEREFORE, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.*] And truly I think I need not use any farther preface, to persuade thee, O Job, to hear my discourse, and to give an attentive ear to all I have to say.

Ver. 2. *Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.*] Behold, now I begin; the words are upon my tongue, if thou art ready to receive them.

Ver. 3. *My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart; and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.*] And I assure thee they shall be the unfeigned language of mine heart, which it shall not be hard for thee to understand: for the instructions they give thee shall be clearly and perspicuously delivered.

Ver. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*] And first of all consider, that I am no other creature than what thou art; a man whom the power of God hath formed, and then inspired with life.

Ver. 5. *If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.*] Thou needest not therefore decline the encounter; but if thou art able to answer, set thy forces in order against me, and stand up to oppose me.

Ver. 6. *Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.*] Thou hast formerly desired (ix. 33. xiii. 3.) that somebody would appear in God's stead, to reason the case with thee: behold, thou hast thy wish; I am the man that appears for him, who am made of the same matter with thyself.

Ver. 7. *Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.*] Look upon me, the combat is not unequal; (as thou complainedst when thou lookedst upon God, ix. 34. xiii. 21.) thou seest no dreadful majesty in me to affright thee, nor any power to oppress thee.

Ver. 8. *Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying.*] I do not accuse thee neither, as thy three friends have done, of crimes uncertain or unknown, but of what I myself, with mine own ears, have heard thee utter.

Ver. 9. *I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.*] For surely thou hast said more than once, (x. 7. xiii. 23. xvi. 17, &c. xxxi.) I am pure and without any fault, in my heart and in my actions, both towards God and towards man.

Ver. 10. *Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.*] Behold, He who I thought would have vindicated my innocence, seeks for occasions to fall out with me, and for slight matters declares himself mine enemy.

Ver. 11. *He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.*] Whom he keeps so fast in prison, that I cannot stir, and watches so narrowly, that I can find no way to escape.

Ver. 12. *Behold, in this thou art not just; I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*] This is thy complaining language, and mark what I say to thee: though I cannot accuse thee, as thy friends have done, of other sins, yet in this thou dost offend; and I must reprehend thee for it, by remembering thee, that there is no comparison between God and man.

Ver. 13. *Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.*] And therefore, why dost thou presume to dispute with him, and call him to an account for his actions, who will not reveal to us all the secrets of his providence?

Ver. 14. *For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not.*] Not that God envies knowledge to us, for he teaches man more ways than one, and a great deal more than he takes care to learn.

Ver. 15. *In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed.*] One way is by a dream (which you may call a night-vision), when men fall into a deep sleep, or lie on their beds between sleeping and waking.

Ver. 16. *Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.*] Then (when their minds are free from the business and cares of the day) he secretly whispers instruction in their ears, and imprints it upon their minds.

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Ver. 17. *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*] Not to make them understand, indeed, all the secret reasons of his providence, but to turn man from his evil way, and to dispose him with all humility to submit himself to his heavenly instructor.

Ver. 18. *He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.*] Who by this means mercifully preserves him (if he obey his admonition) from running on to his own destruction, and rescues him from the violent death which the sword of justice, or of an enemy, would have inflicted on him.

Ver. 19. *He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.*] Another way (and more common than this by dreams) is the painful diseases wherewith he chastises man, and lays him low on his bed, though his constitution of body be never so firm and strong.

Ver. 20. *So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.*] In which languishing case he loathes his food; yea, nauseates that very meat which formerly was his greatest delight.

Ver. 21. *His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.*] Which makes so great a change in him, that his flesh, which formerly appeared plump and fair, cannot be seen; and his bones stick out, which formerly did not appear.

Ver. 22. *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.*] There is but a step between him and his grave; the pangs of death being ready to seize on him.

Ver. 23. *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness.*] If then (which is a third way whereby God teaches men) there come a Divine messenger unto him, a rare person that can expound the mind of God, and persuade the sick man to repent and amend his life;

Ver. 24. *Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.*] He shall beseech God to be gracious to him, saying, Spare him, good Lord, and rescue him from going down to the grave; let it satisfy thee that thou hast corrected him, and that I have found him a penitent.

Ver. 25. *His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth.*] Presently the sick man shall begin to recover, and become a new man in his body as well as in his mind: his flesh shall look as fresh as when he was a child; and he shall be restored to the vigour and strength of his youthful age.

Ver. 26. *He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.*] His prayer also shall be acceptable to God, and prevail for the blessings he asks: he shall go into the house of God, and with the most joyful voice give thanks unto him, and praise his goodness; who will then acquit him, and restore this poor man to his favour.

Ver. 27. *He looketh upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.*] And he (as becomes a true penitent), casting his eyes upon his neighbours, shall openly confess and say, I have offended God, and he hath justly chastised me; I have done wickedly, and he hath punished me according to my desert:

Ver. 28. *He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.*] But hath redeemed me from that death into which I was going; and not only made me live, but given me hope that I shall enjoy prosperous days.

Ver. 29. *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.*] Behold, in all this, the wonderful goodness of God; who by so many means very often admonishes man:

Ver. 30. *To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*] To reduce him from those evil courses which had just brought him to his grave, and to raise him up again to live in all true happiness and pleasure.

Ver. 31. *Mark well, O Job; hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.*] Mark this well, O Job, for it may very much concern thee: consider what I have said; and if thou pleasest to hear me patiently, I will still instruct thee more fully.

Ver. 32. *If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak; for I desire to justify thee.*] Or if thou hast any thing to object to what I have said, I am willing to hear it: speak before I go any further; for I heartily desire thou mayest clear thyself, and appear a righteous person.

Ver. 33. *If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.*] If thou hast no exception against my discourse, then continue thy attentions, and silently listen to me, and I will teach thee more wisdom.

CHAP. XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Here Job shews himself a far more humble and teachable person than his three friends; for though Elihu had invited him to make what exceptions he pleased to his discourse in the former chapter, he would not open his mouth, because he plainly saw that Elihu had hit upon the thing wherein he was defective. And so this young man proceeds to carry the charge a little higher, and tells him, with more sharpness than before, that there were some words in his discourses which sounded in his ears as if he accused God's justice and goodness. For what else did he mean when he complained that God did not do him right, and that he destroyed alike both good and bad? which rash assertions he overthrows, from the consideration of the sovereign dominion, power, righteousness, and wisdom of God; and represents to him what behaviour and discourse would have better become him than that which he had used.

Ver. 1. *FURTHERMORE, Elihu answered and said.*] To this last motion Job consented; and replying never a word, Elihu proceeded in his discourse, and said,

Ver. 2. *Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.*] I do not desire to be judge alone in this cause, but I appeal to them that are wise; and beseech all those (among you that hear me) who are intelligent, to mark and consider what I now deliver.

Ver. 3. *For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.*] You can discern whether it be true or false; for the mind is as proper a judge of discourse, as the palate is of meat.

Ver. 4. *Let us choose to us judgment; let us know among*

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ourselves what is good.] Let us agree to examine the business, that we may be able to pronounce a righteous judgment: let us debate among ourselves, and resolve, whether Job have a good cause or not.

Ver. 5. *For Job hath said, I am righteous; and God hath taken away my judgment.*] For he hath said, I am innocent; and God (who knows I do not deserve to suffer in this manner, xxvii. 2. 6.) will not do me right:

Ver. 6. *Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.*] I scorn to defend myself with lies; but I must still maintain, that this deadly wound is given me for no crime of mine.

Ver. 7. *What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?*] Did you ever know such a man as Job, who, instead of adoring the Almighty (as becomes his wisdom and piety), takes the liberty to pour out abundance of contemptuous language concerning his judgments?

Ver. 8. *Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.*] He associates himself with evil-doers; and talks after the same rate that the wicked are wont to do.

Ver. 9. *For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he shall delight himself with God.*] For he seems to me to be of this opinion, that though a man study to please God, he shall get nothing by it, (ix. 22.)

Ver. 10. *Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.*] What think you of this, ye men of wisdom? Do you not abhor such a thought as much as I, that he who is almighty should wrong any man, and he who is all-sufficient should swerve from the rule of righteousness?

Ver. 11. *For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.*] He will never be charged with such weakness, but always deals with men according as they deserve: for he that doth well never fails to find a reward; and he that doth ill meets with a just punishment.

Ver. 12. *Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.*] Surely I need not fear to affirm this with the greatest confidence, that the supreme Judge of the world will never condemn an innocent person; nor will he that possesses all things be corrupted to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 13. *Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?*] For he did not receive the government of the world from any above himself; nor is there any higher being, whose authority he may be thought to dread, and for fear of whom he may be tempted to do unjustly.

Ver. 14. *If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath.*] No, he made and he sustains all creatures; so that if he should contain his goodness within himself, and recall that spirit and life which he hath infused into them;

Ver. 15. *All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust.*] Nothing could subsist one moment: but all mankind would expire together, and return unto their dust.

Ver. 16. *If now thou hast understanding, hear this; hearken to the voice of my words.*] If thou art wise, mind what I say; and consider also what follows:

Ver. 17. *Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?*] Can he be an enemy to justice himself, who binds us so fast to the practice of it? and wilt thou condemn his actions, who is most powerful, as well as just; and therefore need not serve himself by any wrongful dealing?

Ver. 18. *Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked; and to princes, Ye are ungodly?*] There is no king on earth but looks upon it as a great and insufferable reproach to be called a tyrant: nor will inferior rulers endure you should say, that they have no regard to equity.

Ver. 19. *How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.*] Shall we impute then any such thing to him, before whom a prince or a rich man is no more than the meanest and poorest persons? who shall have the same justice from him with the greatest, because they are all alike the work of his hands.

Ver. 20. *In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.*] How should he stand in awe of the power of kings, or be bribed with the gifts of the rich, who can strike them all dead in a moment? Whole nations tremble before him, and in their deepest security are destroyed. He needs not the help of any force on earth to put down a mighty tyrant; but invisible powers carry him away.

Ver. 21. *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.*] For there is no one passage of man's life but he is acquainted with it: and therefore cannot be suspected, through ignorance of their actions (no more than through fear of their persons), to overlook their crimes, or to do them any injustice.

Ver. 22. *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.*] They may seek to hide their wickedness, when they have committed it; and may make excuses and subtle pretences: but they cannot cast a mist before his eyes, who sees into the thickest darkness, and the deepest secrets.

Ver. 23. *For he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God.*] And therefore, as he will never charge man with that of which he is not guilty; so, when he calls him to an account, he will not delay, nor put off his judgment, to hear what man can say for himself.

Ver. 24. *He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.*] For he needs not be informed how matters stand; and therefore breaks in pieces mighty men, without inquiry or examination of witnesses against them, and confers their dignity upon others.

Ver. 25. *Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.*] And by this means shews that he knows their works; when he so suddenly overturns them, that they are crushed in pieces.

Ver. 26. *He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others.*] He punishes them as men that in his eyes are apparently wicked; and therefore makes them public examples for the terror of their neighbours;

Ver. 27. *Because they turned back from him, and would*

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not consider any of his ways.] Because they would not follow his counsels, nor regard any of his commands:

Ver. 28. *So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.*] But went on in their oppression of the poor, till they cried to heaven for vengeance upon them: and the cry of such afflicted people God never fails to answer.

Ver. 29. *When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.*] And if he will grant such poor wretches rest and ease, who can disturb them? or if he be angry with their oppressor, who can shew him favour? (which is as true of whole nations, as one single person.)

Ver. 30. *That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*] He will not let the wicked tyrant reign always, though he pretend piety and the public good never so much, lest the people should be ensnared into sin by his example.

Ver. 31. *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.*] Wherefore it is best for an afflicted person not to complain, but to suspect himself (though he be never so good), and presently to say to God, I confess this suffering is just; I will not offend by pleading my innocence.

Ver. 32. *That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*] If I have overlooked any thing that I should have observed, do thou shew it me: if I have committed any fault, I will take care to do so no more.

Ver. 33. *Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.*] Hast thou addressed thyself to God in this manner? Answer that question; for God will recompense it, if thou dost despise such good counsel; which perhaps thou wilt choose to do, but so would not I. Speak therefore what thy opinion is.

Ver. 34. *Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.*] Or let any understanding persons tell us what is their opinion; for such, as I said before, would I have to judge between us.

Ver. 35. *Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.*] Job seems to be very much mistaken; and his discourses to be inconsiderate and without reason.

Ver. 36. *My desire is, that Job may be tried unto the end, because of his answers for wicked men.*] And therefore I am so far from wishing he may be presently released from his afflictions, that I take it to be more desirable he should be still tried and proved by them, till he recant the answers in which he hath complained of Divine Providence, after the manner of wicked men.

Ver. 37. *For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands amongst us, and multiplieth his words against God.*] For otherwise he will add greater offences to those lesser he hath already committed: he will defend what he hath inconsiderately spoken; nay, triumph, as if he had got the better of us; and, instead of making the confession to which I have exhorted him, continue to multiply his complaints against God.

CHAP. XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

Job still keeps silence, notwithstanding that Elihu had made the harshest construction of his words; because he was sensible he meant him well, and had now, in the conclusion of his discourse, given him very wholesome counsel; and, allowing his integrity, had only charged him with some unhappy expressions, which had fallen from him when he was in great anguish of spirit. Which, I suppose, was the reason he doth not contradict him, though he continue here in this chapter to fasten the very same harsh sense upon his words, ver. 2, 3. which he refutes from the consideration of the infinite disproportion there is between man and God: who is never the worse, indeed, for any evil, nor at all the better for any good that we do; and yet hath such a love to mankind, that it is certain he would not have them miserable, but takes care for their relief when they are oppressed, if they address themselves, as they ought, to him.

Ver. 1. *ELIHU spake moreover, and said.*] To this Job making no answer, Elihu pressed him again, and said,

Ver. 2. *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?*] Let me appeal to thy own conscience: Dost thou think this to be right, that thou saidst God is not so righteous as I am?

Ver. 3. *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin?*] What else could be thy meaning, when thou utteredst such words as these, What doth God care whether I be innocent or not? or what benefit shall I have by it if I be?

Ver. 4. *I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.*] I will answer thee, and such as thou art, in a few words.

Ver. 5. *Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds, which are higher than thou.*] Cast up thine eyes to the heavens, look upon the clouds and the sky, and consider, that as high as they are, they are not so much above thee as God is above them.

Ver. 6. *If thou sinnest, What doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?*] And therefore it is true, that he is never the worse for the sins which thou hast committed, nor will be the worse, though thou should proceed to commit more and greater:

Ver. 7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*] And that he is never the better for thy being righteous, which can confer nothing upon him which he hath not already, nor add any thing to his greatness.

Ver. 8. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*] But thou shouldest not conclude from thence, that it is all one whether a man be good or bad: for thy wickedness will prove hurtful to thyself, and to the rest of mankind; and thy righteousness will do thee and them great service.

Ver. 9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry; they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.*] The cries of the oppressed tell us what mischief injustice doth, and how miserable it makes them: the tyranny of the mighty forces them to cry aloud to God

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for vengeance; who, though he be not hurt himself by it, is touched with a sense of their affliction.

Ver. 10. *But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night.*] The greatest mischief is, that not one of these miserable wretches inquires seriously after God, who gave him his being; and is able therefore not only to relieve him, but to comfort, yea, to fill him with joy in the midst of the saddest affliction.

Ver. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?*] Having endued us with reason and wisdom to consider, that he, who takes care of the beasts and the birds, will not neglect us, if we do not merely cry and groan under our oppressions (as those brute creatures do); but, with hearty repentance, and a thankful sense of his benefits, and humble confidence in his goodness, piously address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer), because of the pride of evil men.*] This is the reason that God doth not deliver them; because they lie crying, indeed, under their affliction; but it is not a sense of him, but only the haughty violence of their oppressors, which extorts it from them.

Ver. 13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*] For we must not think that God (though he be inclined to relieve the afflicted) will give ear to men so void of piety: he will not regard those who have so little regard to him; even for this reason, because he stands in need of nobody.

Ver. 14. *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.*] Therefore, although thou complainest that thou dost not see him appear for thy deliverance, (xxiii. 8.) yet do not conclude from thence that he is unrighteous; but go and condemn thyself before him, and then patiently wait for his mercy.

Ver. 15. *But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*] But now, because there is nothing of this in thee, God hath thus severely afflicted thee; and not at all regarded the exceeding great prosperity wherein thou hast hitherto lived.

Ver. 16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.*] And Job may spare his complaints hereafter, for they are to no purpose; he heapeth up words without reason.

CHAP. XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Having reprehended some of the unwarrantable expressions in Job's discourses (which he himself would not justify), Elihu comes closer to the business, and speaks to the very cause itself. Shewing, from the nature of God, and the methods of his providence, that if Job had, instead of disputing, submitted himself humbly to God's corrections, he would have delivered him (it being as easy for him to lift up as to cast down): and that his not discerning the reason of his corrections, (which Job had made a great cause of his grief, xix. 7.) ought not to have hindered his humble submission; because we are not able to comprehend any of the works of God, which we see every day, and acknowledge to be most excellently contrived.

Ver. 1. *ELIHU also proceeded, and said.*] Job still keeping silence, Elihu proceeded in his discourse, and said,

Ver. 2. *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*] Be not weary, and I will open my mind more fully; for thou hast not yet heard all that God hath to say for himself by my mouth;

Ver. 3. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*] Which shall now, from the most sublime contemplations, assert the righteousness of my Maker.

Ver. 4. *For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*] For assure thyself I will not seek to baffle thee with sophistical arguments: he that discourses with thee is none of those subtle disputers, but loves sincere and solid reason.

Ver. 5. *Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.*] Know then that God is most mighty, but despiseth not the meanest: the excellence of his power, and the greatness of his mind, will not suffer him to wrong any body.

Ver. 6. *He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.*] When men are extremely wicked, and fit to be punished, he will let them live no longer; but the poor at last shall recover their right, and be delivered out of their affliction.

Ver. 7. *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.*] For whatsoever affliction the righteous suffer, God never ceases to take a special care of them; and sometimes raises them to the highest offices that kings can confer upon them: in which they are settled as long as they live, and exalted above the power of their enemies that would pull them down.

Ver. 8. *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction.*] Or if they should fall into any trouble, which lies as heavy on them, and holds them as fast, as if they were bound with chains and with cords;

Ver. 9. *Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.*] It is only to make them reflect upon their lives, and to shew them their sins; because they grow strong, and begin to prevail over them.

Ver. 10. *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*] He disposeth them hereby to listen to instruction, and admonishes them to forsake their sins, and return to their duty.

Ver. 11. *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*] And if they profit so much by their affliction, as to obey his counsel, and devoutly serve him, they shall regain their former splendour; and pass the rest of their life in prosperity and pleasure.

Ver. 12. *But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.*] But if they be disobedient, they shall be utterly cut off, and die in their folly.

Ver. 13. *But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath; they cry not when he bindeth them.*] And they that are false-hearted, do but heap up wrath to themselves by their counterfeit piety: which surprises them so suddenly, that it gives them no time so much as to cry to God, when his punishments seize on them.

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Ver. 14. *They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*] They die before their time, in the flower of their age; and perish like the impure Sodomites, with a hasty and unexpected destruction.

Ver. 15. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.*] Whereas he delivers the poor humble man in his affliction; and makes his oppression the means of giving him wholesome counsel:

Ver. 16. *Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.*] Even so would he have rescued thee (if thou hadst humbly submitted to his correction) out of these miserable straits to which thou art reduced: and not only enlarged thee, but set thee so far from all danger of falling again into them, that peace and plenty should have been thy portion.

Ver. 17. *But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.*] But thou hast maintained the cause of the wicked: and such as a man's cause is, such will the judgment of God be upon him.

Ver. 18. *Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*] And because God is angry with thee, take heed lest thou farther incense him to punish thee so heavily, that upon no terms he will deliver thee.

Ver. 19. *Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.*] Dost thou think he will have any regard to thy riches? no, not if thou hadst all the treasure and all the force which all the power on earth can muster up.

Ver. 20. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*] Do not dream that they can do thee any service; nor entertain thyself with vain hopes, as thou art musing on thy bed in the night; when God sometimes destroys whole nations on a sudden.

Ver. 21. *Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*] But let thy sufferings teach thee caution, and make thee afraid to go on to provoke offended justice: for thou hast done it too much already, in choosing rather to accuse Divine Providence, than to submit patiently to his chastisements.

Ver. 22. *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?*] Consider the vast extent of God's power, which lifts men up as well as casts them down. What lord is there so absolute as he? or who shall teach him how to govern his dominions?

Ver. 23. *Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?*] What visitor is there over him, to examine and take an account of his actions? or who may presume to say, this or that is not well done?

Ver. 24. *Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.*] See that thou leave off this carping at his providence, and remember to extol and magnify it, as well as the wonderful fabric of the world, which men behold with admiration and praise.

Ver. 25. *Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.*] All mankind contemplate it with astonishment: there are none so dull, but in the farthest parts of the earth they behold, if they open their eyes, the majesty of God;

Ver. 26. *Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.*] And must confess that he is great in wisdom and power, and cannot be comprehended by our shallow understandings; which are presently confounded, when they enter into the search of his eternal being.

Ver. 27. *For he maketh the small drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.*] For it is he who dissolves the clouds into water, and doth not pour it down all at once; but by small drops sweetly restores to the earth the vapour which was exhaled from thence:

Ver. 28. *Which the clouds do drop and distil upon a man abundantly.*] For he hath made the clouds to be fluid bodies; which distil their showers in so many places, that there are multitudes of spectators and admirers of this wonderful contrivance.

Ver. 29. *Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?*] And can any one understand how he spreads those clouds, and makes them hang in the air, when they are full of water? or give an account of the dreadful sounds which are heard from thence, and which tell us that he dwells in those celestial places?

Ver. 30. *Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.*] Observe also how he spreads the beams of the sun upon the sea, and covers it all over with light; which raises new vapours and clouds in the room of those which are exhausted.

Ver. 31. *For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.*] Which he uses for quite contrary ends; both to punish mankind by storms, and tempests, and floods, and to make a plentiful provision for them by fruitful showers.

Ver. 32. *With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine, by the cloud that cometh betwixt.*] By those clouds also he sometimes quite hideth the sun from us, that it cannot ripen the fruits; and sometimes only intercepts its beams awhile, that it may not burn them up by immoderate heat.

Ver. 33. *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*] The very cattle perceive the cloud as soon as it rises, and declare what God intends to do with it; whether to turn it into storms and tempests, or into fruitful rain and showers.

CHAP. XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

Elihu continues his speech, which he had begun before, concerning the incomprehensible works of God: and limits himself chiefly, as he had in the foregoing chapter, to the wonders God doth in the clouds. To which, at last, he subjoins the amazing extent, brightness, and firmness of the sky; in which the sun shines with a lustre which we are not able to behold. And thence concludes, that the splendour of the Divine Majesty is infinitely more dazzling, and that we must not pretend to give an account of his counsels.

Ver. 1. *AT this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.*] These are a few of the works of God; and though there be innumerable more, yet this one single effect of his power strikes terror into me, and makes my heart tremble, as if it would leap out of my body, and leave me dead.

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Ver. 2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*] Hearken I beseech you seriously to the horrible noise which comes out of some of those clouds, and it will astonish you also. The smallest murmurs are so dreadful, that it may be fitly styled the voice of God, calling men to stand in awe of him.

Ver. 3. *He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.*] It is heard far and near, for he darts it through the whole region of the air; accompanied with his flashes of lightning, which shoot to the ends of the earth.

Ver. 4. *After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.*] After them follow the claps of thunder, more terrible than the roarings of a lion: which grow louder and louder till they conclude in a violent rain, or hail, or tempest.

Ver. 5. *God thundereth marvellously with his voice: great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*] And he who thunders thus with his most wonderful voice, doth other great things which the wit of man cannot comprehend.

Ver. 6. *For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.*] For in those clouds, which I have so often mentioned, he makes the snow, and commands it to cover the earth; and on a sudden they turn into rain, which sometimes falls in gentle showers, and sometimes in impetuous spouts of water:

Ver. 7. *He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.*] Which stop the labour of all those whose business is in the fields; and make the husbandmen know that he disposeth of them as he pleases.

Ver. 8. *Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.*] The very beasts also are driven at that season into their lurking-places, and are forced to stay in their dens.

Ver. 9. *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north.*] From one quarter of the heavens blow turbulent winds; and from the opposite quarter those cold blasts which clear and purify the air again.

Ver. 10. *By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.*] By the like sharp blasts God sends the frost; and binds up the waters so fast that they cannot flow.

Ver. 11. *Also by waterings he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth his bright cloud.*] In serene evenings also he presses the cloud into drops of dew upon the earth; or the dewy cloud receiving the sunbeams, by a dispersed and various light, makes the beautiful rainbow in the heavens.

Ver. 12. *And it is turned round about by his counsels; that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.*] For it is turned about and whirled several ways, according to the orders of his wise counsel; and so are all the rest that I have mentioned, which execute his commands upon the face of the whole earth.

Ver. 13. *He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.*] Being sent either to bring a dearth, and to scourge our sins with plagues and pestilential diseases; or to produce the wonted crop of the earth for the necessary sustenance of man and beast; or to reward our obedience with extraordinary plenty, and very healthful seasons.

Ver. 14. *Hearken unto me, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*] Listen diligently to these things, O Job; do not dispute any more with God, but silently consider these his wonderful works.

Ver. 15. *Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?*] Canst thou tell beforehand what orders God will give about them? Art thou able to tell so much as when a rainbow will appear in the clouds?

Ver. 16. *Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?*] What canst thou tell us then of the hanging of the clouds in the air, as in an equal balance, and such-like stupendous works of his most absolute wisdom?

Ver. 17. *How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?*] Whence comes the violent heat which we sometimes feel? or how do calms come out of the same quarter from whence come whirlwinds? (ver. 9.)

Ver. 18. *Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?*] Lift up thy thoughts still higher, and tell us, Didst thou join with him when he stretched out the sky, in which, as in a mirror, we behold the admirable power and wisdom of him, who, though it be so wide and vast, made it as firm as it is clear and bright?

Ver. 19. *Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*] Teach us (if thou art so well skilled) what we shall say to him of his power and wisdom; for we must confess our ignorance is so great, that our thoughts are confounded when we attempt it.

Ver. 20. *Shall it be told him that I speak? If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*] Is any thing that I have said of him worth his hearing? Whoever he be that goes about to describe him shall lose himself, and be dazzled with the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 21. *And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.*] For, alas! men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after a wind hath swept and cleansed them;

Ver. 22. *Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.*] And brought pure and serene weather out of the northern parts: how then shall they look upon God, whose majesty is most dreadful, and therefore not to be pried into with curiosity, but worshipped and praised with the humblest reverence?

Ver. 23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*] For when we have done all we can, we must acknowledge, that the Almighty cannot be comprehended by our understanding: his power is so excellent, his judgment so exact, his justice so abundant, that he ought not to be questioned by us for what he doth; but if he be, he will not give an account of his actions.

Ver. 24. *Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*] Which should make all men stand in awe of him, and lowly adore, rather than boldly dispute with him: for he despiseth all those who are so wise in their own conceit.

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CHAP. XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

What Elihu had said concerning the Divine Majesty, in the twenty-second verse of the foregoing, God declares to be true, by a sensible demonstration, as I have expressed it in the first verse of this chapter. In which God himself appears as a judge (according to Job's repeated desires) to decide this great controversy. And taking up the argument begun by Elihu (who came nearest to the truth), and prosecuting it in inimitable words (excelling his and all other men's in the loftiness of the style, as much as thunder doth a whisper), he convinces Job of his ignorance and weakness, by shewing him how little he understood of the most obvious things in this world. Intending from thence, at last, to infer, that he who found himself puzzled, when he went about to give an account of the meanest of God's visible works, should not presume to penetrate into his secret counsels, nor question his goodness, no more than he could his wisdom and power, though he knew not why he was afflicted. One instance had been sufficient to bring Job to a nonplus; but he heaps up abundance, to humble him the more when he saw how much cause there was for it: whether he considered the earth, or the heavens, the sea, or the sun, things contained in the bosom of the sea, or in the bowels of the earth, especially all the meteors (as we call them) which are formed in the clouds, and the constellations in the higher regions; together with the beasts upon the earth, and the birds which fly in the air; one of each of which he mentions in the end of this chapter.

Ver. 1. *THEN the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said.*] No sooner had Elihu spoken these words, but there was a sensible token of the presence of that most dreadful majesty of God (xxxvii. 22.) among them. For there arose an unusual cloud (after the manner of God's appearing in those days), and a voice came out of it, as loud as a tempest, which called to Job, saying,

Ver. 2. *Who is this that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge?*] Who is this that disparages my counsels with his ignorant discourses about them?

Ver. 3. *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*] If thou hast the courage to argue the case with me (as thou hast often desired), make thyself ready for the debate, and answer me the questions I shall ask thee.

Ver. 4. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding.*] Where wast thou when I founded the earth? Speak, man, and relate how I went about that work, if thou art so skilful as thou pretendest.

Ver. 5. *Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*] How came it to have these dimensions? (For thou, sure, who presumest to censure my providence, canst not be ignorant of such matters.) After what manner was the line and the rule applied, to give it these exact proportions?

Ver. 6. *Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof.*] Canst thou tell how it was fixed and settled upon its centre, or what it is that holds all the parts of it so firmly together?

Ver. 7. *When the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*] Where wast thou when the bright stars first appeared to proclaim my praise with one consent; and all the angelical powers expressed their joy, but did not assist at the birth of the world?

Ver. 8. *Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?*] What midwife had the sea to bring it forth, when it burst out of the confused abyss, like an infant out of the womb?

Ver. 9. *When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it.*] And I covered it with clouds as with a garment, and wrapped its boisterous waves in a thick mist, with as much ease as a nurse swaddles a new-born child;

Ver. 10. *And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors.*] And laid it in that bed, which I had appointed to be broken up for it in the earth? Where, though it be tossed to and fro, as an infant in a cradle, yet it keeps within its shores, which cannot be overturned.

Ver. 11. *And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.*] For I have fixed its bounds, and resolved, Thus far shalt thou flow, but no farther: these sands and these cliffs shall stop thy swelling waves, be they lifted up never so tempestuously.

Ver. 12. *Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the day-spring to know his place.*] Raise up thy thoughts still higher, and tell me, dost thou remember since the morning-light was made? Or was it thou who ordered the sun, in what part of the heaven it should every day arise?

Ver. 13. *That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?*] And spread its beams to the ends of the earth; that the wicked, who delight in works of darkness, may be detected and dragged to their deserved punishment?

Ver. 14. *It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.*] For they are daunted at its approach, and change colour as oft as the clay doth its form under different seals; they are no more consistent with themselves than a changeable garment:

Ver. 15. *And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.*] And at last lose the use of that light, which innocent persons enjoy with so much pleasure; their insolent power, which in the night was so audacious, being broken in pieces in the morning.

Ver. 16. *Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?*] O thou who adventurest to enter into the abyss of my judgments, didst thou ever penetrate into the spring of the sea? or hast thou perfectly discovered all that lies at the bottom of that great deep?

Ver. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*] Hath the earth opened all her dark caverns to thee? or hast thou gone down to the very centre of it?

Ver. 18. *Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.*] Nay, dost thou so much as understand all that grows upon the surface of the earth? shew thy skill, if it be so comprehensive.

Ver. 19. *Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as*

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for darkness, where is the place thereof.] Tell me, which is the way that leads to the place where light takes up its dwelling when the sun goes down? Or what becomes of the darkness when the sun rises again?

Ver. 20. *That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?*] Art thou able to go and bring either of them hither? or to carry them back again away from hence, and prescribe them their limits at thy pleasure?

Ver. 21. *Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?*] Art thou acquainted with these things, because thou wast then born when I made them? How comest thou to discourse so confidently of my government of mankind, who canst neither tell that thou shouldest be born, nor art able now to say when thou shalt die?

Ver. 22. *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasure of the hail.*] And when wast thou in the clouds, to see how the snow or the hail is made in such abundance;

Ver. 23. *Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*] That I need no other weapon than those, if I please to use them, for the destruction of mine enemies?

Ver. 24. *By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?*] Art thou able to give an account how the light diffuses itself all over in an instant? or what makes the east wind blow so violently upon the earth?

Ver. 25. *Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters; or a way for the lightning of thunder.*] Didst thou make a channel in heaven for the conveyance of overflowing showers? or open the way for the breaking out of lightning and thunder?

Ver. 26. *To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man?*] Is it by thy direction that these showers go, and fall upon the desert places, where there are no inhabitants to employ their art to provide them with water?

Ver. 27. *To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?*] And that they satisfy the dry and rotten parts of the earth, where all the labour of man is unprofitable, without such plentiful rains to make them fruitful?

Ver. 28. *Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?*] What is more common than the rain and the dew? but who is able to produce one drop of either?

Ver. 29. *Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?*] In whose womb was the ice formed? or who can make so small a thing as the hoary frost?

Ver. 30. *The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.*] Whence comes the cold that turns the waters into stone, and fetters the raging waves of the sea?

Ver. 31. *Canst thou bind the sweet influence of Pleiades? or loose the bands of Orion?*] Canst thou forbid the sweet flowers to come forth when the seven stars arise in the spring? or open the earth for the husbandman's labour, when the winter season, at the rising of Orion, ties up their hands?

Ver. 32. *Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?*] Is it by thy power that the rest of the stars, great and small, appear in the southern and the northern signs, in their proper seasons?

Ver. 33. *Knowest thou the ordinance of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof on the earth?*] Dost thou understand the orders and the laws which I have established among the heavenly bodies? or couldest thou tell what to do, if it were referred to thee here on earth, to settle the government of them?

Ver. 34. *Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?*] Let me see an instance of thy power and skill; lift up thy voice to the clouds, and command them to pour out abundance of waters upon the place where thou now art.

Ver. 35. *Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?*] Or call to the lightnings, and bid them go whither thou hast a mind to send them? and let me hear them answer, Behold, we are ready to obey thee.

Ver. 36. *Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?*] Didst thou give thyself understanding? how comes it then to be so small, that thou canst not tell how a thought is made?

Ver. 37. *Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven.*] Nor, with all the wisdom thou hast, so much as count the number of the clouds, whose showers thou art as unable to stop, as to make them run:

Ver. 38. *When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?*] Though they have fallen so long, that the earth is abundantly satisfied, and fit for the plough, or for the seed?

Ver. 39. *Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion, or fill the appetite of the young lions.*] Or dost thou pretend to have great power upon earth, though none in heaven? wilt thou undertake then to provide food for a lion and all his whelps,

Ver. 40. *When they couch in their den, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?*] And that in a desert; where they lie lurking in their dens, and greedily watch for a prey in close and shady places?

Ver. 41. *Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.*] Or, which is less, wilt thou take upon thee to feed the young ravens? who, expelled by the old ones out of their nest, complain to me of their cruelty, but know not where to get a bit of meat.

CHAP. XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter continues the discourse begun in the latter end of the foregoing, concerning God's providence about beasts and birds: and to the two beforementioned he adds seven more. First, the wild goat, or hind, whose hard labour among the rocks God is wont to help and promote (as the Psalmist observes, xxix. 9. and other authors agree) by a clap of thunder; the terror of which puts her into such an agony, that she presently excludes her young one, which sticks in the birth. Then he mentions the wild ass; and after that a tall creature in those countries called *reem*, which we render a *unicorn;* but Bo-

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chartus hath proved to be a two-horned goat, in Arabia, of great strength, with an erected head and ears. Of the rest I need say nothing here, they are so well known.

Ver. 1. *KNOWEST thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?*] Vain man, who wouldest so fain pry into my secrets! didst thou ever climb the rocks to see the wild goats bring forth? or hast thou assisted at the hard labour of the hinds, and helped to ease them of their burden?

Ver. 2. *Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?*] Dost thou know the moment of their conception? or keepest an account when they will be delivered?

Ver. 3. *They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.*] Hast thou seen how they bow themselves; with what pain they bring forth, and with how much difficulty they are freed from their sorrow?

Ver. 4. *Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.*] And yet their young ones are lusty and strong; they grow up in the open fields; they leave their mothers, and return to them no more.

Ver. 5. *Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?*] Was it thou that gave the wild ass his liberty, and made him so free from their servitude, in which you keep other creatures?

Ver. 6. *Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.*] Who but I made that difference between him and them; and laying no burden on him, assigned him the wilderness and barren countries for his habitation?

Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.*] Where he laughs at those that live in the tumult and bustle of cities; and hears none of the cries of him that drives other asses to their labour.

Ver. 8. *The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.*] Nor is confined in small enclosures, but hath whole mountains to range in for his pasture; where he finds sufficient food to appease his hunger.

Ver. 9. *Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?*] Go to the unicorn (thou who wouldest have all things conformable to thy will), and see if thou canst persuade him to serve thee: will he be content to be tied to thy crib all night?

Ver. 10. *Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?*] Or submit his proud neck to thy yoke all day? Canst thou make him go to plough? or will he draw the harrow over thy land?

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?*] Wilt thou rely upon him (because his strength is great) to do all the rest of thy work in the field?

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?*] Or leave thy harvest out of doors, till thou hast prevailed with him to bring it home, and lay it in thy barn?

Ver. 13. *Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?*] Have other birds any reason to complain that they are not so goodly as the ostrich? whose wing is triumphant, if it be compared with the wing and the feather of the stork;

Ver. 14. *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust.*] But her inward qualities are not so beautiful as her plumes: for she doth not seek for solitary places wherein to lay her eggs; but drops them any where upon the ground, and negligently leaves them to be corrupted by the heat of the sand and of the sun.

Ver. 15. *And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.*] She doth not secure them from the foot of travellers, or of wild beasts; who frequently tread upon them and crush them in pieces:

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear.*] But is hardened against the fruit of her own womb, as if it were not hers; and so she loses all her labour, because she hath no fear it may be lost.

Ver. 17. *Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.*] For God hath not given her that wisdom which he hath bestowed upon other creatures; but made her of a stupid and careless nature.

Ver. 18. *What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.*] Though he hath imparted so much as is necessary for her preservation: for when she raises herself, and lifts up her wings, she runs so fast, that she despises a man on horseback, who cannot overtake her.

Ver. 19. *Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?*] And now I speak of the horse, let me ask thee again, Who was it that made him so much superior to other creatures in strength and in courage? didst thou give him his valiant spirit, or clothe his neck with such a stately mane?

Ver. 20. *Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.*] Or put that vigour and mettle into him, which make him leap and bound in the air like a grasshopper? there is a majesty in his looks; and when he snorts vehemently, it is terrible.

Ver. 21. *He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.*] He stamps impatiently on the ground, and breaks it up with his feet: he glories in his strength, and goes out boldly to meet the arms that oppose him.

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.*] He derides all the dreadful instruments of war, and cannot be dismayed by them: he runs upon naked swords;

Ver. 23. *The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.*] And is not daunted at the noise of arrows which come whizzing by his ears, nor at the sharp points of spears and lances which are thrust at his breast.

Ver. 24. *He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.*] He makes the earth quake and tremble as he gallops over it, and rids abundance of ground in a moment: neither can he stand still, when he hears the sound of the trumpet:

Ver. 25. *He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.*] But the louder it is, the more he neighs and dances for joy. He perceiveth the battle before it begins,

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by the thundering voice of the captains, and the shouting of the soldiers.

Ver. 26. *Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings towards the south?*] Behold, also, how the hawk mounts up aloft. Didst thou give her those swift wings; or teach her, when the winter comes, to fly into the southern parts, that she may still enjoy the warmth of the sun?

Ver. 27. *Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?*] But what bird soars so high as the eagle? Is she beholden to thee for that strength which carries her into the clouds? or was it by thy direction that she builds her nest quite out of all men's reach?

Ver. 28. *She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.*] She dwells on the top of high rocks; in the steep and craggy rock, as in an inaccessible fortress, she settles her abode.

Ver. 29. *From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.*] There she leaves her young ones safely, while she goes to provide them food; from thence (so sharp is her sight) she spies her prey a vast way off.

Ver. 30. *Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.*] Which when she hath seized and torn she brings to her nest, that they may suck its blood: she looks down to the very earth; and where the carcasses lie, there may she be found.

CHAP. XL.

ARGUMENT.

Job modestly declining to say one word in his own defence (though he was graciously invited by God to speak, if he had any plea remaining), is still more humbled by a plain declaration from the Divine Majesty, that Elihu had reason to reprove him for his immoderate complaints (which some might look upon as an accusation of God's providence), and for maintaining his own righteousness so much, and God's righteousness so little, in the dispute he had had with his friends. Shewing him withal, that he was not sensible enough of the infinite distance and inequality between him and God; when he desired so vehemently to argue his case with him, that he forgot to make those submissions to the Divine Majesty, which had better become him. This disproportion is most livelily represented and illustrated, by an admirable description of the strength of the *behemoth*, a word of Egyptian termination; signifying, not the elephant, (which seldom lies down, and never among reeds, as this doth, ver. 21.) but a creature in that country, called by the Greek writers *hippopotamus*, i. e. *river-horse*. For it appears by the second book of Esdras, chap. vi. 49. that the Hebrews reckon *behemoth*, not among the land creatures, but among those belonging to the water, which were created on the fifth day. And there is none, that we know, of that sort, to whom the characters here mentioned belong, but the creature now named.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, the Lord answered Job, and said.*] After a short silence, to see what Job would reply to this long discourse, the Lord proceeded, and said;

Ver. 2. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*] Why dost thou not speak? Hath not the Almighty brought arguments enough to convince thee? Let him that will argue with God about his providence, first make an answer to these questions.

Ver. 3. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said.*] Then Job, whose confusion had made him silent, answered with great humility and said;

Ver. 4. *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*] Behold, I am a wretched creature, and not worthy to speak unto thy Majesty: nor do I know what to answer; and therefore I will hold my peace.

Ver. 5. *Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther.*] I have said too much already, in speaking only these two words to thee: but I have done; I will add no more.

Ver. 6. *Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said.*] Then the Divine Majesty spake again, after the same manner as before, saying,

Ver. 7. *Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*] What, hast thou (who desiredst so much to plead with me) lost thy courage? pluck up thy spirit, man, and prepare thyself (as I said at first) to answer the questions I shall farther ask thee.

Ver. 8. *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?*] Is there any reason to suspect my care of mankind, who have shewn it so much about other creatures? Canst thou not defend thyself, but thou must also complain of me? must I be condemned that thou mayest be justified?

Ver. 9. *Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?*] Who art thou, that talketh so much of thine own innocence, that thou forgetteth to maintain my righteousness? hast thou a power equal to mine; or canst thou speak with a voice like this; or imitate the thunder thou hearest in the clouds?

Ver. 10. *Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty.*] Lift up thyself then; and let me see thee appear in the highest majesty: put on thy robes, and shew thyself in such royal state, that all may honour and reverence thy excellent greatness.

Ver. 11. *Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.*] Let all thine adversaries round about thee (as becomes a mighty prince) feel the fierceness of thy wrath; frown upon all the haughty, and make them hang down their heads.

Ver. 12. *Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.*] Look, I say, upon every proud oppressor, and make him cringe and throw himself at thy feet: tread down all the wicked, wheresoever thou shalt find them.

Ver. 13. *Hide them in the dust together, and bind their faces in secret.*] Cast them all into one grave, that the world may be no more troubled with them: cover those faces with perpetual shame and confusion, which now bear themselves so high, and overlook all others.

Ver. 14. *Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.*] When I see thee do such things as these, then will I myself also magnify thy power, and acknowledge that thou needest none of my help to deliver thee.

Ver. 15. *Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.*] But consider awhile (if thou art

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not yet humble enough) a creature* which I have made in a country not far from thee: he lives among the fishes in the great river of Egypt, but he feeds upon the earth, and eateth grass like an ox.

*Behemoth, i.e. river-horse.

Ver. 16. *Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.*] Consider, I say, the greatness of his strength, and the firmness of his flesh, not only in his loins, but even in the navel of his belly, where other creatures are wont to be weak and tender.

Ver. 17. *He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*] He hath a tail as thick and as stiff as a cedar, but he bends and throws it back at his pleasure: the nerves of his thighs are so many, that they are intricate and perplexed one within another.

Ver. 18. *His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.*] His bones (for so they are rather than gristles) are as strong as bars of brass, and as hard and firm as rods of iron.

Ver. 19. *He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.*] He is one of the principal works of God, a very singular instance of his power: he that made him hath fastened such crooked teeth in his jaws, exceeding sharp, that therewith he mows the grass and the corn as with a scythe.

Ver. 20. *Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.*] For he goes in the night to graze upon the hills, in the company of the rest of the beasts of the field; who sport themselves in those rich pastures:

Ver. 21. *He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens.*] But (in the day) he lies down in shady and close places, under the covert of the reeds, and in the fenny mud.

Ver. 22. *The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.*] The bushy trees, which are there very numerous, afford him a shelter; he is encompassed with the willows and the osiers, which grow in abundance on the banks of Nile.

Ver. 23. *Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.*] Nay, behold, he dives to the very bottom of the river, and there takes his repose without fear: he will be secure, though Jordan also should break out, and be poured upon his mouth.

Ver. 24. *He taketh it with his eyes; his nose pierceth through snares.*] Who dare come in his sight, or attempt to take him by open force? Where is he that will undertake to fasten hooks in his nose?

CHAP. XLI.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter another creature of vast bigness and strength is described, called in the Arabian language *leviathan*. By which we are not, in this place, to understand the whale; because that fish is not armed with such scales as the leviathan is here said to have: (ver. 15.) nor is impenetrable, as every body knows; and, to say no more, never creeps upon the earth, which is part of the description of this leviathan, (ver. 3.) Whereby we are therefore to understand the *crocodile* (to whom every part of this description exactly belongs), a creature as big again as a man of the greatest stature, and in some places vastly greater: there having been crocodiles seen of twenty, nay forty feet long; and in some places of a hundred. To this fierce and untameable creature God sends Job, that he might learn more humility than to contend with his majesty, when he saw how unable he was to stand before one of his creatures. That use he himself teaches Job to make of this description, (ver. 10—12.)

Ver. 1. *CANST thou draw out leviathan with a hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?*] There is another creature also in the same river, which I would have thee consider; and behold therein the Divine power and human weakness. Canst thou catch the leviathan* as you do other fishes? Canst thou let down a line, and draw him out by the tongue with a hook?

*Crocodile.

Ver. 2. *Canst thou put a hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?*] When thou hast made a cord of the rushes of the river, canst thou put it about his nose; or strike an iron, as sharp as a thorn, into his jaw?

Ver. 3. *Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?*] Will he importune thy favour, and with many prayers beseech thee to spare him? will he sue for his liberty with submissive words, and speak thee fair to let him go?

Ver. 4. *Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?*] Will he enter into bonds, and make a solemn covenant with thee, never to do thee hurt, but be thy slave, and serve thee for ever?

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*] Wilt thou adventure to play with him, as with a sparrow? or tie him by the leg, for the sport and pastime of thy daughters?

Ver. 6. *Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?*] Shall the society of fishermen make a feast for joy they have taken him; and sell their share in him among the merchants?

Ver. 7. *Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears?*] Where is the dart wherewith thou canst hope to penetrate his skin? or the fish-spear that is able to wound his head?

Ver. 8. *Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.*] Go, and touch him if thou darest: the battle will be soon ended; for thou shalt not do it the second time.

Ver. 9. *Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?*] Mark what I say; he will be sorely disappointed that thinks to take him: for he will be ready to sink down with fear at the very sight of him.

Ver. 10. *None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?*] Though he lie asleep on the shore, there is none so hardy as to dare to awake him. Who is he then that takes upon him to contend with me? If one of my creatures be so terrible, how dangerous is it to provoke my majesty?

Ver. 11. *Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.*] And where is the man to whom I am a debtor? How came I, that made the whole world, to be obliged to thee, or any

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one else? Did you first begin to do me kindnesses, that I should owe you a requital?

Ver. 12. *I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.*] What insolence is this to dispute with me, when thou art not able to stand before this single work of my hands? None of those limbs or joints I will conceal, nor forbear to speak of his strength, and of the comely disposition of all his parts.

Ver. 13. *Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?*] And first take a view of his scaly skin, wherewith he is covered: who hath ever stripped him of that upper garment? or who dare come within his doubled snout?

Ver. 14. *Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.*] Who will venture to open his wide jaws, and so much as look into his mouth, in which his long rows of teeth are very dreadful?

Ver. 15. *His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.*] The scales of his back are like the plates of a shield, which I have provided for his defence: every one of them is closely compacted, and strictly sealed to the next.

Ver. 16. *One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.*] They are knit so close, that the air, which presses into all things else, cannot come between them.

Ver. 17. *They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.*] They cleave one to another, they hold so fast together that no art or violence can make a separation.

Ver. 18. *By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.*] When he sneezeth, as he lies gaping in the sun, the spirits break forth with such a force that they seem to sparkle: and when he riseth up out of the river, his eyes appear before the rest of his body, as the morning light before the sun.

Ver. 19. *Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.*] The steam also which then comes out of his mouth is as vehement as if it were full of burning torches; or there were a fire in him, that sends forth sparks.

Ver. 20. *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething-pot or caldron.*] Out of his nostrils goes a smoke, like the reek of a seething-pot or a boiling caldron.

Ver. 21. *His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.*] His breath is so hot, though he come out of the water, that it is sufficient to kindle coals; and may be called a flame, which issues out of his mouth.

Ver. 22. *In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.*] His neck is exceeding strong, as if it were the very seat of strength: sadness and terror march before him, and seize on all those that meet him.

Ver. 23. *The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.*] The muscles of his flesh are glued together; every one of them is compact and solid; they are not easily moved.

Ver. 24. *His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.*] He is as far from fear as he is from pity: for his heart is as firm as a stone; as hard as an anvil, or a piece of the nether millstone.

Ver. 25. *When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.*] But the stoutest hearts tremble when he lifts himself up above the water: they are seized with such a fright, that they are at their wits' end, and know not which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 26. *The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold; the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.*] Though they assault him with the sword, it will do them no service; for the hardness of his skin will break it in pieces: the spear, also the dart and the javelin, are altogether as feeble, and cannot enter into him.

Ver. 27. *He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.*] All the other weapons of iron (which the wit of man can devise) he values no more than a straw; and those of brass no more than rotten wood.

Ver. 28. *The arrow cannot make him flee: sling-stones are turned with him into stubble.*] The arrow shot out of the strongest bow cannot make him flee: and those stones which are thrown out of a sling with so much force, move him no more than a little chaff.

Ver. 29. *Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.*] Lay at him with heavy clubs, and he regards them no more than if they were stubble: shake the lance at him, and he contemns its most violent thrusts.

Ver. 30. *Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.*] For instead of him it meets only with the rough shells wherewith he is armed; which are so hard, that he beats back the sharpest weapon, and throws it into the mire.

Ver. 31. *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.*] When he tumbles about in the bottom of the river, he raises bubbles on the top; and the water of the lake is so troubled with the slimy mud which he stirreth up, that it looks like a pot of ointment.

Ver. 32. *He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.*] When he swims, he makes furrows in the face of the deep; and leaves a path behind him so covered with a froth and foam, that it looks as if it were grown old, and were full of gray hairs.

Ver. 33. *Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.*] His fellow is not to be found upon the earth; where he creeps indeed in the dust, but is so made that he cannot be trodden under foot and bruised.

Ver. 34. *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*] No, though he lie so low, yet he despises the tallest beast; and reigns over the oxen and camels, and all those creatures whose long legs raise them to the loftiest height; whom he masters and rends in pieces at his pleasure.

CHAP. XLII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter concludes the book, with an account how Job completed the submission which he had begun before to make to God: whose pardon he sorrowfully begs; confessing and repenting of his fault; resigning himself entirely to be instructed by him; but resolving never hereafter to complain, nor to move any questions about his providence. This repentance God accepts; and for his sake grants a pardon also to his friends, whom he condemns as more faulty than Job. Who after this receives extraordinary marks of God's favour; and hath such an ample recompence made him for his losses, as may encourage all posterity to persevere in well-doing and pa-

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tient suffering; believing steadfastly that nothing can be done or permitted by God, without much reason (whose wisdom shines so gloriously in all his works), and humbly expecting a comfortable issue out of all our troubles.

Ver. 1. *THEN Job answered the Lord, and said.*] These words so livelily represented the power and wisdom of God in his works, that Job, seeing his error more clearly than ever, submitted himself unto the great Lord of all; and said,

Ver. 2. *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*] I am abundantly satisfied that thy power is as large as thy will; and that nothing can hinder thee from effecting every thing which thou designest: but, as thou hadst reason to cast me down, so thou canst restore me and lift me up again.

Ver. 3. *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*] I am sensible also of the justice of the reproof which thou hast given me, (xxxviii. 2.) and do confess I very much forgot myself, when I adventured to talk so ignorantly of thy wise administrations. It was that which made me so rash as to discourse of things far above my reach; wonderful things, which I ought humbly to admire, not arrogantly censure.

Ver. 4. *Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*] Be not angry with me, I beseech thee, but graciously hear me speaking in thy own words. I do not pretend to give an account of thy wonderful works, and of thy providence; and therefore ask me no more questions, (xxxviii. 3.) but let me learn of thee, and do thou instruct my ignorance.

Ver. 5. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.*] Something I did know before of thy greatness, and mightiness, and wisdom; but nothing so clearly as I do now, by this revelation and visible appearance of thy dreadful majesty.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*] Which touches me with a sensible displeasure against myself for my indecent complaints, and vehement expostulations, and eager desires to die, or to be delivered: I condemn them all (together with whatsoever I have spoken too boldly about thy government), and in the most sorrowful manner repent, that I have justified myself so much, and thee so little.

Ver. 7. *And it was so, that, after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*] Which ingenuous confession pleased the Lord so much, that he did not chide Job any farther: but turning his voice to Eliphaz (his principal accuser), he said, I am angry with thee and with thy two friends: for you have made a perverse construction of the afflictions I sent upon Job; whom, notwithstanding all his errors, I acknowledge to be my servant, and to have spoken better of me than you have done.

Ver. 8. *Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*] And therefore take no less than seven bullocks, and as many rams, and carry them to my servant Job; whom I appoint to be your priest, to offer for you a burnt-offering, in token of my absolute dominion over all creatures. And that faithful servant of mine shall pray for you, and obtain your pardon: for I have a great love to him, and will be favourable to you for his sake. Do not fail to go about this, lest I inflict some grievous punishment upon you; because, as I said, you have made an ill representation of my providence, and repeated those things confidently which my servant Job shewed you to be false.

Ver. 9. *So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.*] So Eliphaz and his two companions submitted themselves also unto God. and went, as he commanded them, and desired Job to intercede for them. And the Lord heard his prayer, and was reconciled to them.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.*] And at that very time when Job was performing this charitable office for his friends, the Lord was pleased to begin to restore to him all those things which had been taken away from him: and never ceased, till he had not only established him in his former splendour, but made him twice as rich as he was before.

Ver. 11. *Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house; and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold.*] All his kindred likewise, and his familiar acquaintance, (whom his unusual affliction had estranged from him, xix. 3.) when they heard of the wonders the Lord had done for him, came to visit him and feast with him: and after they had condoled his misery, and testified their sorrow for all that had befallen him, they congratulated his happy recovery; and, in token of their joy, every one of them presented him with a piece of money and a pendant of gold.

Ver. 12. *So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.*] Thus the Lord impoverished this good man only to make him richer. For, instead of seven thousand sheep which he had before his troubles, he found he had fourteen thousand when they were ended; and for three thousand camels which were taken from him, the Lord gave him six thousand; and multiplied his yokes of oxen, which were but five hundred, into a thousand; and his she-asses in the same proportion.

Ver. 13. *He had also seven sons and three daughters.*] His wife also became very fruitful, and brought him as many children as he had lost; seven sons and three daughters.

Ver. 14. *And he called the name of the first Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.*] And to preserve the memory of so marvellous a deliverance (of which they were so many living monuments), he called the name of the first Jemima, that is, the day; because of the felicity wherein he now shone, after a sad night of affliction, wherein he had lain; and the second

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Kezia (a spice of an excellent smell), because God had healed his filthy stinking ulcers, which made even his wife refuse to come near him; (xix. 17.) and the last he called Keren-happuch, *i. e.* plenty restored, or a horn of varnish, because God had wiped away the tears which fouled his face, (as he complains, xvi. 16.)

Ver. 15. *And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*] The beauty also of these women proved as bright as their names; for there were none so amiable in all that country: and their father did not (as the manner was) endow them with a small portion of his goods, but (having a large estate, and a great affection to them) he made them coheirs with their brethren, in the inheritance which he left them.

Ver. 16. *After this lived Job a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.*] After which glorious restitution of him and his family, his years were multiplied as well as his estate: for the Lord added almost an age and a half (no less than a hundred and forty years) to those he had lived before; so that he had the pleasure to see his children's children to the fourth generation.

Ver. 17. *So Job died, being old, and full of days.*] And departed not out of the world till he was so fully satisfied, that he desired not to live any longer.

APPENDIX.

HERE ends the book of Job; whose short sufferings (for the space of twelve months, as the Hebrews reckon in Seder Olam) were recompensed with a very long life in great prosperity. If we could rely upon all their traditions, this might have been added to the paraphrase upon the last words, That the whole time of his life was two hundred and ten years. For in the Jerusalem Targum upon Exod. xii. 40. and in Bereschith Rabba upon Gen. xlii. 2. they make account that the Israelites stayed just so long in Egypt: and in the Chronicle forenamed, and in Bava Bathra, and other books, they tell us, that Job was born that very year when Jacob went with his family down thither to sojourn; and died that same year when they were delivered from thence by the hand of Moses. But this agrees neither with what other of their authors say, whom I mentioned in my preface; nor with the LXX. who, in the last verse but one of this book, insert this clause, "All the days of his life were two hundred and forty years."

This, indeed, might be easily reconciled with the account beforementioned, if we did but rectify their numbers in the beginning of that verse by the Hebrew truth, and cut off the thirty years which they have added to the true time that he lived after his recovery from his sickness; for then this passage also must be corrected, and instead of two hundred and forty we must set down two hundred and ten. Which we might also prove in this manner (out of Seder Olam, cap. 3.) to be the right account of his age; because it is said (ver. 10. of the last chapter) that *the Lord added to Job the double of what he had before;* and therefore, if a hundred and forty years were added, he had seventy before, which in all make two hundred and ten. But it is not worth our while to trouble ourselves with such uncertainties; much less is it safe to rely upon any thing which is supported by no stronger authority than the Hebrew tradition: the vanity of which appears most notoriously in this, that Manasseh ben Israel saith, (lib. i. de Resurrect. cap. *ult.*) it is evidently certain, by tradition, that the Mahometans at this day pay a great reverence to this holy man's sepulchre, and honour it at Constantinople with much religion and devotion; when all men that have any considerable acquaintance with other authors, besides those of their own nation (upon which the Hebrews dote), may easily know, that the Job whom the Turks honour was a captain of the Saracens, who was slain when they besieged that city, in the year of Christ 675.

It will be to better purpose if I take notice of an observation of theirs, which hath more certainty in it, because clearly founded upon the Holy Scriptures; which is, that Job was a prophet among the gentiles, and a prophet of very eminent quality and degree: who deserved to have been at least mentioned by Josephus in his book of Antiquities, where he hath not vouchsafed to name him; nay, to have been praised by the son of Sirach, in his catalogue of famous men, (Ecclus. xliv. &c.) who were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. But, according to the humour of the Jews, he magnifies only those of their own country, or such from whom they were directly descended: not considering, how much it was for their honour, that, by the care of their noble ancestors, the history of Job, and his excellent virtues, had been preserved: which he ought not therefore to have omitted, but to have celebrated him among the chief of those worthy persons, "by whom God wrought great glory; such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies," &c. (Ecclus. xliv. 2, 3.)

Nay, his friends deserved a short remembrance, who seem nothing inferior to the wise men among the Jews (though they mistook in the application of many excellent truths), but are acknowledged by themselves to have been prophets among the gentiles. And not without reason; for Eliphaz, we read, (iv. 13, &c.) had night-visions, an apparition of an angel, and secret whispers, like the still small voice which Elijah heard, (1 Kings xix. 12.) which made R. Sol. Jarchi not fear to say, that the Schechinah was upon him. And Elihu, it is easy to discern, felt a Divine power working in him mightily, (xxxii. 8. 18, 19.) which was not altogether a stranger, he shews, (xxxiii. 15, 16.) to other men; whom God in those days instructed by dreams, amongst other ways that he had of communicating his mind to them. But there was none equal to that wherein he made himself known to Job, who in three things seems to have had the pre-eminence among all the gentile prophets. First, in that God was pleased to speak to him aloud by a voice from heaven, xxxviii. 1. (which the Jews call the *Bath Col*) and not merely in such silent whispers as he did to Eliphaz. Secondly, that this voice was attended with a notable token of a Divine presence, from whence it came; *viz.* a *whirlwind,* which I take to have been something like that *sound as of a rushing mighty wind,*

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wherein the Holy Ghost came upon the day of Pentecost. And, lastly, he saw likewise, in all probability, the appearance of some visible majesty, (xlii. 5.) suppose in a glorious cloud, (as the LXX. seem to understand it, xxxviii. 1.) or something like that which Moses beheld in the bush, when God first called unto him out of the midst of it, (Exod. iii. 4.)

Which need not at all puzzle our belief; when we consider that the church in those days was catholic, and not as yet confined to any one family or nation. God was pleased, indeed, to shew an extraordinary grace to Abraham, in calling him out of his own country and father's house, where idolatry had taken a deep root, or had been long growing without any hope of amendment. For if we may give any credit to Kessæus, a Mahometan writer, or to Elmacinus, a Christian, they were infected with it in the days of Heber, who stoutly opposed it, but with so little effect, that though God sent a whirlwind, which threw down all their idols, and broke them in pieces, that false worship still prevailed. But this doth not warrant us to imagine that God utterly rejected and neglected all other people; to whom he revealed himself in a very familiar manner, and gave many demonstrations of his Divine presence among them, till they corrupted themselves by such abominable idolatries, that they became altogether unprofitable, and unfit for the society of that Holy Spirit which ofttimes moved them. Even among the Canaanites, into whose country God led Abraham, we find Melchisedec was then a priest of the most high God; a greater person than that prophet, and the minister of that oracle (some fancy) which Rebekah went to consult when she felt the twins struggling in her womb, Gen. xxv. 22. To whom I might add several others, if I had a mind to prolong this discourse.

And though the book beforementioned (Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 21.) is pleased to say, that the Holy Ghost ceased to inspire men of any other nation, after the giving of the law; yet it is easy to shew, that therein it contradicts even its own affirmation elsewhere, which is grounded on good reason, that Balaam was a prophet divinely moved among the Syrians in Mesopotamia. He was a man, indeed, of naughty affections, and inclined to superstition, but still had many illuminations and motions from the Most High; as appears, not only by his predictions, but by the express words of Moses, who says, "the Spirit of God came upon him," Numb. xxiv. 2. To which, if I should add his own testimony concerning himself, that he *heard the words of God*, and *saw the vision of the Almighty*, and that in an extraordinary manner, *having his eyes open* in his ecstasy, I see no reason why it should be rejected; especially since he declared at the first, when the princes of Midian importuned him to go with them, that he would be wholly guided by the Lord in the business; and when he was come to Balak, constantly went to meet the Lord, to ask him what he should say, and professed his care to speak what the Lord had put in his mouth, (xxii. 8. xxiii. 3. 12. 15, &c.) These considerations, to which many more might be added, are sufficient to shew, that there is little, if any, ground for the opinion of Theodoret; who resolves, (Quæst. 39. in Num.) that Balaam did not inquire of the true God, though the answer was given by him of whom he was ignorant, not by him whom he invoked: and that the conclusion of St. Basil, (Epist. 80. ad Eustath.) or Greg. Nyssen (Lib. de Trinitate; it is uncertain whose work it is wherein we find it), is more remote from truth, who determines, that when the Scripture saith he went to consult with God, we are thereby to understand the devil. For should we allow the word *Elohim*, or God, to be so equivocal, that it may be applied not only to other excellent beings besides the Divinity, but to the devil himself (which is the foundation there laid for that conclusion), yet the word *Jehovah* or *Lord* is never so used; and Balaam always says that he would go and meet with him. And accordingly, the Lord is said to put a word in his mouth, even then when just before we read that *God met him*, xxiii. 4, 5. Where it is most reasonable by *God* to understand the angel mentioned xxii. 35. whom the Lord employed to deliver his mind unto him.

All which I have said to shew, that God did not quite desert the gentile world, as long as there were any considerable relics of the ancient religion remaining among them; and they did not wholly divert to fables, and deliver up themselves to the guidance of evil spirits, against the apparent testimony of the Holy Spirit of God; who spake to them by such good men as Job, in whose days those sinners were not only reproved, but punished also by the judges, who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; which seems to have been the oldest idolatry of all other, as not only Maimonides, but Diodorus Siculus observes. And if they had listened to such instructions, and not suffered themselves to be led merely by sense, to which those heavenly bodies appeared in such an amazing brightness that struck with admiration (as the last named author speaks, they fancied them to be Θεοὺς ἀϊδίους τε καὶ πρώτους, *both eternal and the first Gods)*; we cannot conceive that they would have sunk so low, as to fall into image-worship: which in Job's country doth not seem to have obtained in his days.

But the chiefest part of the wisdom of this prophet consisted in his piety; of which he proved a rare example, as I have said already; especially in adversity: wherein he behaved himself with such admirable virtue, that though the apostle to the Hebrews does not mention him among those who were famous for their *faith* (he not being of their race to whom the promises were made), yet St. James in the next epistle highly magnifies and applauds his *patience*. And not only propounds him, together with the prophets and holy men, "who had spoken to them in the name of the Lord," (ver. 10.) as a pattern of well-doing, and contented suffering, to the Christian Hebrews; but numbers him among those blessed souls, whose worthy deeds we praise, and whose happiness we admire: (ver. 11.) or rather he names him alone, as an example of a happy man; who endured more than we read of in ancient times, and in the end found the Lord so mercifully gracious and bountiful to him, that it may encourage all pious men to endure with such a wonderful submission as he did.

Who, when he lost his goods, his house, his children, his health, nay, was all over ulcerous, and in great pain; and, moreover, was solicited by his wife to speak irreverently, if not irreligiously, of God, and to deny his providence; and by his friends was upbraided as a hypocrite, nay, accused in their passion as a tyrannical oppressor; whereby they endeavoured to bereave him, as St. Ambrose observes, (lib. i. de Interpel. cap. 4.) of that great comfort

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in afflictions, *culpa vacare, to be conscious of no enormous crime,* and to make him appear to himself as the author of his calamity; at which his inferiors mocked and scoffed, who had formerly had him in great veneration: nay, it exposed him to the scorn of those who were not worthy to be set with the dogs of his flock; so that he looked as if he had been deserted by God, and made an example of his heaviest displeasure: yet he bare all at the very first (when men are wont to be shaken, nay overthrown, by the sudden news of such dreadful disasters), not only with much resolution and resignation, but with hearty thanksgiving; and, through the whole course of his calamity, committed no error that I can discern, but what the indiscreet and uncharitable censures of his friends provoked him unto: which put him upon too frequent and long justifications of himself, and perplexed him extremely (which seems his greatest trouble), that he could not find out the reason why God afflicted him so severely.

But in the issue God revealed to him what it was fit for him to think in this matter also: and thereby hath given us such satisfaction in that great controversy, and difficult question about God's providence, as is no where to be met withal but in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even prudent men, as St. Ambrose observes, (lib. ii. de Interpellatione, cap. 1.) in a book he hath written about Job, are apt to be extremely moved when they see the wicked abound with good things, and the just very much afflicted: and truly, says he, it is *lubricus locus, a slippery place,* in which the saints have scarce been able to tread in the path of a true opinion, as we see in David, and Job, who maintained a long conflict with his three ancient friends that came to comfort him upon this subject. And God himself brought the dispute at last to such a conclusion, as may fully settle the minds of all those who meet with this book, and preserve them from being scandalized, or in the least offended, on such occasions. The Mahometans themselves seem to be fully satisfied, as we read in the Lives of the Fathers, written in the Arabian language by Kessæus; who brings in the Most High, speaking to Job's friends after this manner, (Hotting. Hist. Orientalis, lib. i. cap. 3.) "Do you not know that Job is a prophet of God, whom he hath chosen to his apostleship, and to whom he hath committed his inspiration? God would not have you think that he is angry with him; as you seem to gather from this afflicted state wherein he lies. For you know that God is wont to prove the prophets, the just, the martyrs, and other good men; wherein notwithstanding there is no indignation, or contempt of them, but honour rather with God most high."

Thus St. Chrysostom I find most elegantly represents him as a far more glorious spectacle when he sat on the dunghill, than the greatest prince, without his virtue, is when he sits upon a throne. "His ulcers (says he, Hom. v. ad Populum Antiochenum) were far more valuable in my account than all their precious stones. For what profit do we receive by them? What necessity, what want do they supply? But these ulcers of his are the comfort of all manner of heaviness that can seize upon us. You may know this to be true, if, when a man hath lost his genuine and only son, you shew him a thousand jewels and precious stones, which give no comfort at all to his grief, nor in the least assuage his trouble and pain. But in this case, if you remember him of the wounds of Job, he presently finds some ease; when you ask him, saying, Why dost thou weep and lament, O man, on this fashion? Thou hast lost one son, but that blessed man lost all the children he had: and, together with that blow, received a stroke in his flesh, and sat naked in the dung, besmeared all over with the filth that ran out of his wounds; in a deep consumption, which by little and little wasted that just, that true, that devout man, who abstained from all manner of evil, and had God himself for the witness of his virtue. If thou dost but speak these words, instantly thou extinguishest the heaviness of the mourner, and riddest him out of all his grief; and so the ulcers of that righteous man become more profitable to him than jewels.

"Do you therefore conceive now that you have that champion before your eyes; and that you see the dung and him sitting in it; a statue of gold, of diamonds, I am not able to say of what: for there is nothing so precious as to be worthy to be compared with that ulcerated body, whose sores shine more brightly than the beams of the sun; which enlighten only the eyes of the body, but these illuminate the eyes of the mind. They make us see, and they made the devil quite blind: for after he had given those wounds in his body, he fled and appeared no more. See here, beloved, how great the gain of affliction is! For when that righteous man was rich, and enjoyed his ease, the devil had something to say against him: though falsely indeed, yet this he had to say; 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' But after he had stripped him naked, and made him a beggar, he had not a word to say; he durst not so much as open his mouth against him. When he was rich, then he adventured to wrestle with him, and threatened to supplant him; but after he had made him poor, deprived him of all he had, and reduced him to the extremest grief and sorrow, he ran away, and durst not renew the assault. When his body was sound then he laid violent hands on him; but when he had filled it with wounds, he was routed and fled away vanquished. By this thou seest how much poverty may prove better than riches, weakness than health, temptation than ease and quiet, to those that are vigilant and watchful: who make a profit of all these; and by fighting grow more illustrious and courageous. Who ever saw, who ever heard, such noble combats?"

But there is none, that I have met withal, who represents him in such lively colours, as the great St. Basil; who, in a sermon of his (tom. i. Homil. xxiii. p. 565, &c. the latter part of which was occasioned by a lamentable fire, that happened near their church, and put it in danger), exhorts all the rich, who were untouched by the flames, to relieve their poor neighbours, whose goods were consumed in them; and then addressing himself to those, who had saved themselves, but nothing else, beseeches them, "Not to take their loss too heavily, nor to let their minds be disturbed; but to shake off the misty cloud of sorrow, and to strengthen their souls with such generous and manly thoughts, as might turn this accident into an occasion of crowns. For which end, he advises them to put themselves in mind of the constancy of Job; and to say to themselves, as he did, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it seemed good to the Lord, so it is come to pass.' And by no means (says he) let any of you be moved with what hath happened, either to say, or think, there is no Providence which rules our affairs; or presume

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to accuse the dispensation and judgment of the Lord; but let him fix his eyes on that champion, and make him his counsellor, who will advise him to better thoughts.

"Let him recount in order all the agonies he endured, and then observe how bravely he came off; and how the devil threw all his darts at him in vain; not one of them giving him a deadly wound. First he set upon his goods, and endeavoured to overwhelm him with the doleful news of various calamities, which came tumbling, like the waves of the sea, one upon the neck of another; but all to no purpose, for the just man received them as a rock doth the fury of a tempest; turning the rage of the waves into froth, and standing itself immoveable. He said not a word, that we read of; he made no complaints of these disasters; or if he said any thing, we may well presume, it was those decent and becoming words which we read in the conclusion, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass.' But he did not think any of those calamities that befel him to be worth his lamenting with his tears.

"Well, but there comes one afterward that tells him a most dismal story, of the death of all his children by the fall of the house wherein they were making merry. At this, it is true, he rent his garments; and it is the first expression of his grief that we meet withal, in compliance with the passions of nature, and to declare himself a most tender father. But he set some bounds to his grief, and adorned what had happened with those pious words, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,' &c. As if he should have said, I was called their father, as long as he that made me so pleased. But now he hath taken off this crown of children from my head, and it is not fit for me to contend and dispute with him about his own. Let that be which seemeth best to the Lord. He it was that formed them, I was but the instrument. Why should I, who am but a servant, foolishly complain of my master; and repine at that decree, which I cannot alter?

"With such words as these that righteous man wounded the devil; and, as one would say, shot a dart quite through his heart, which so enraged him, that, seeing him still a conqueror, he made an assault upon his body; which he turned into corruption, and made it become such a bag of worms, that from a throne it was cast upon a dunghill. And yet the good man remained immoveable: and when his body was torn, preserved still the hidden treasure of piety in his soul, of which the devil could not rob him. And therefore, not knowing what to do more, he betook himself to his old stratagem; and instigating his wife to entertain irreligious and blasphemous thoughts, attempted that way to overthrow this champion. For she, tired with the long continuance of his calamities, came to him, and clapping her hands at what she beheld, upbraided him with these lamentable fruits of his piety, and rehearsing his former prosperity, and then pointing at this present misery, asked him, if this was the reward which he received from the Lord for all his sacrifices? With abundance of such-like words, which were enough to disturb the most composed, and subvert the most steady and resolved mind. I am a vagabond, said she, and am forced to crouch to others like a slave; I, who was a queen, am constrained to depend upon my servants for relief; I, who maintained many liberally, am now nourished myself out of other folks' charity. Adding, that it would be far better for him, to provoke his angry Creator, by impious words, to cut him off, than by an unprofitable patience thus to prolong both his and her misery.

"But he, more offended with these words than any of his former sufferings, with eyes full of indignation, looked upon her as an enemy, and asked what ailed her to talk thus like one of the foolish women? Lay aside, said he, these thoughts, and let me hear no more of this advice, which makes me appear to myself as if one half of me were wicked and irreligious. 'What, shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not suffer evil?' Remember all the past happiness thou hast enjoyed, and oppose better unto worse. No man's life is entirely and thoroughly happy. Τὸ διὰ παντὸς εὐ πράττειν, μόνου Θεοῦ. *To be always as well as we can wish, belongs to God alone.* If thou art grieved at what is present, fetch thy comfort from what thou hast received before. Now thou weepest, but formerly thou didst laugh; now thou art poor, but there was a time when thou wantedst nothing. Then thou drankest of the pure fountain of life; be content, and drink now the more patiently of the troubled waters. Behold the rivers, their streams are not clear in all places; and our life thou knowest is like to one of them, which slides away continually, and is ofttimes full of waves, which come rolling one upon another: one part of this river is passed by, and another is running on its course. This part of it is gushing out from the fountain, and the next is ready to follow it as soon as it is gone. And thus we are all making great haste to the common sea; death, I mean, which swallows up all at last.

"If we receive good from the hands of the Lord, shall we not bear evil? Think of that again. Shall we go about to compel the Judge to afford us just the very same things for ever? Shall we presume to instruct our Lord and Master how he ought to conduct our life? He hath the power of his own decrees and orders as he pleases, so he appoints our portion for us. And we know that he is wise, and that he dispenses to his servants what is most profitable for them. Do not then curiously pry into the counsels and resolutions of thy Lord and Governor; only take in good part, and affectionately embrace, whatsoever is ordered by his wisdom. Love his administration; and whatsoever he is pleased to give, receive it with pleasure. Demonstrate now in a sorrowful condition, that thou wast worthy of all the joy which thou hadst formerly in a better.

"Thus Job discoursing, he baffled the devil once more; and gave him such a repulse, that he made him perfectly ashamed to see himself thus vanquished. And what ensued after this? why, when the devil was beaten, his disease fled away too, having assaulted him in vain, and got no ground of him. His flesh began to recover into a second youth; he flourished also in his estate, which was restored to him with increase. For riches flowed so plentifully into his house, that they were double to what he had before: first, that he might be no loser by his affliction; and, secondly, that he might have a merciful reward of his patience under it. Therefore it was that his horses, mules, and camels, and sheep, and all the rest of his revenue, were doubled, only his children were no more than equal to the number he had before, seven sons and three daughters. The reason was because his beasts, indeed, perished entirely; but

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the better part of his children still survived, when they were taken from him. And therefore being again adorned with as many sons and daughters as formerly he enjoyed, he had a double portion of them also; those who are present with him here, and those who expected him in the other world. Behold then what good things this just man, Job, heaped up to himself, by his patient submission to God. And do thou, therefore, if thou hast suffered grievously in this fire, which the malice of the devil kindled, bear it constantly, and lenify the affliction with these better thoughts; according to that which is written, 'Cast all thy care upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.'"

To this purpose that great person, St. Basil, discourses, when he represents how Job received the first assaults of his affliction, and how happily it ended. And there is great reason to think that he did not, in the progress of it, swerve from those good beginnings, which had so blessed a conclusion; but whatsoever expressions fell from him, when he was engaged in the heat of disputation, he still preserved such a religious temper of mind, as made him not cease to submit himself reverently to God's will, and to thank him for all the benefits he had formerly received from his bounty. Nor do I find any cause for the censures which Maimonides (More Nevoch. par. iii. cap. 23. and out of him Manasseh ben Israel, lib. i. de Resurrectione, cap. 16.) hath passed upon the disputation between him and his four friends, about Divine Providence, which he hath thus stated:

"Job (saith he) maintains that mankind is so vile a sort of being, that God doth not regard the best of them any more than he doth the worst; but it is all one to him, when a calamity comes, whether it light upon the offenders, or upon the innocent. Nay, more than this, he affirms that there is no expectation after death, and consequently no hope remaining for him." Which are such blasphemies, that Maimonides is fain to seek excuses for him; and for that end, alleges a common saying among their wise men, that "A man is not apprehended, or seized on, because of his grief;" that is, what he says in extremity of pain is not imputed to him for sin. But there is no need of this apology; for the places he alleges do not prove him guilty of uttering such things, as (to speak in his words) are evil in the highest degree. Though Manasseh ben Israel is so presumptuous, as to charge him with such a profane denial of Divine Providence, at least here below the moon, that he makes him impute all his misery to the malignant aspect of the planets, under which he was conceived and born.

To which opinion of Job, say they, every one of his friends opposed a particular opinion of his own, differing each of them from the other. And, first, Eliphaz endeavours to establish this for a certain truth, "That as afflictions do not come by chance, but by the providence of God, so they are sent for the sins of men;" and therefore, without all doubt, Job was a great offender, which was the cause he was handled in this manner. "This opinion (says Maimonides) he held to the last; only was fain to add, in conclusion, that all the ways whereby we deserve punishment do not appear."

Then after him (when Job had argued against this) comes Bildad, who produces a new opinion, grounded upon the doctrine of permutation, or recompence, as they speak; that is, "He believed the evils which Job endured here, should, if he proved innocent, be changed into good things; and, in the issue, be highly serviceable to him in another world."

After whom succeeds Zophar, with a different resolution from all these; which was, "That God acts according to his own pleasure, and that we are not to search for any cause of his actions out of his own will; nor to say, why doth he this, and not that? In short, we are not to seek the way of equity, and the decree of wisdom in his doings; for it necessarily belongs to his essence that he do what he will; and our understanding is too shallow to comprehend the secrets of his wisdom, whose right and property it is that he may do according to his pleasure, and for no other cause."

And these four opinions about Providence, Maimonides undertakes to shew have had their several assertors since, who have propagated them among their scholars. Job's opinion, he saith, is the same with Aristotle's, who attributed all to accident. Bildad was followed by the sect of Mutazali (a kind of pharisees among the Ishmaelites), who ascribed all to wisdom. Zophar, by the sect of Assaria, who attributed all to will and pleasure. And Eliphaz, he fancies, held the opinion of the law; which is, that God deals with men according to their works.

But when that all these men had disputed, nothing moved Job, there stands up another, whose name was Elihu, "who first proves the providence of God from prophetical dreams, (xxxiii. 15.) and to those things which Eliphaz had said, adds, according to the imagination of Manasseh ben Israel, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, (which he labours to find in ver. 14.) and thereby, in a wonderful way, says he, resolves all the doubt, by determining that Job, and other just men, may be punished for sins which they committed in a former body."

But as there is no footstep, that I can see, for this fond conceit, which he honours with the name of a mystery; so it is evident these men follow their own vain inventions in all this discourse, directly contrary to the book itself. For they make Job's opinion the very worst of all the rest; when the Lord himself tells Eliphaz, in the conclusion of the book, (xlii. 7.) that he was angry with him and his two other friends, because they had not spoken of him so rightly as Job had. And it doth not appear by their speeches, that they held several opinions about Providence, and took every one of them a different way (that is a mere rabbinical subtlety) to solve the doubt, wherein Job's unusual sufferings had perplexed them. But they seem to have harped all of them upon one and the same string, as I have represented in the arguments before each chapter.

From whence the conclusion of Maimonides will be very evident (which is the best thing he says), that "The scope of the book is, to establish the great article of providence; and thereby to preserve us from error, in thinking that God's knowledge is like our knowledge, or his intention, providence, and government, like our intention, providence, and government. Which foundation being laid, nothing will seem hard to a man whatsoever happens: nor will he fall into dubious thoughts concerning God, whether he knows what is befallen us or not, and whether he takes any care of us. But rather he will be inflamed the more vehemently in the love of God; as it is said in the end of this prophecy, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' So say our wise men, 'They that act out of love, will rejoice in chastisements.'"

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THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

TO ALL DEVOUT CHRISTIANS,

ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT FREQUENT THE

DAILY PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH,

THE AUTHOR DEDICATETH THIS

PARAPHRASE UPON THE BOOK OF PSALMS;

Wishing them increase of grace and comfort, by "singing praises unto God with understanding," (Ps. xlvii. 7.)

PREFACE.

THE work itself proves so long, that I must make the preface the shorter; which shall be confined to these two heads: First, A brief account of the Book of Psalms; Secondly, Of my paraphrase upon it.

I. For the first, The book is a most admirable piece of poetry, which moves more powerfully, and touches the mind more sensibly, than sentences in prose; especially when it is in such perfection, as we find it in these Divine inspirations. For, as Melancthon truly speaks, this is the most elegant work extant in the world; and hath performed that, I may add, which Plato himself wished for, but confessed was above the reach of mere men. There was no more efficacious way, that philosopher clearly saw, of instructing youth, than by odes and songs; about which he discourses at large, and gives a great many cautions in his second book of Laws; but, after all, concludes at last, (p. 657. edit. Serran.) τοῦτο δὲ Θεοῦ, ἢ θείου τινὸς, ἂν εἴη. *This must be the work of God, or of some Divine man:* wherein he plainly acknowledges the defect of their institution (though certain poems were pretended then to have been anciently made by their goddess Isis), and marvellously justifies the Hebrew discipline, who taught their children or scholars by hymns.

Which Moses, the man of God, began to compose, (Exod. xv. Deut. xxxii.) and other inspired persons afterward imitated, (Judg. v. 1 Sam. ii.) but was brought to perfection by David. Who, as he was an admirable artist in music, (1 Sam. xvi. 18.) and himself invented some musical instruments, as we learn from the prophet Amos, vi. 5. so was an incomparable poet, (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.) and took all occasions to exercise this faculty, not on such low subjects as those to which it is commonly debased, but in abundance of Divine meditations, which are gathered together in this book; wherein he calls upon them to listen unto him, saying, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord," (Psal. xxxiv. 11.)

It is called, in their language, *Sepher Tehillem, the Book of Psalms, or Hymns; i. e.* Praises of the Lord: because, though there are many complaints, and imprecations, and prayers, in it, yet the greatest part are praises or thanksgivings unto God: and in those other, there are many mixtures of acknowledgments what God had formerly done for him, or of confidence what he would still do, or of resolutions how thankful he would be, when God granted him deliverance. Which gave them such a strange power "to cure heaviness, to extirpate grief, to wipe away sorrow, to lay asleep troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with any sort of pains, (they are the words of Proclus, archbishop of Constantinople, Serm. de Incarn. Dom.) as well as to move compunction for sin, and to stimulate unto piety;" that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes.

And as it is called the Book of Psalms, or Praises, from the major part, so they are called David's Psalms, because he made the most of them; though it must be confessed, there were several other authors, by whom some of them were composed.

In the Hebrew they are divided, like Moses's law, into five books, as I shall shew in due place, and so may be called a second Pentateuch: which seem to have been collected by several persons (as will appear in the preface to each of them); for no other reason but that can be given, why all that belong to one subject were not put together; or, at least, all those composed by David placed by themselves, and not so mixed, as they are, with those made by other authors.

Some think they were gathered together by the friends of Hezekiah, before the captivity. But if they had been so, they would, in all probability, have been disposed in such order as they were penned; all the sacred books being preserved in the temple, as Josephus witnesses, (Antiq. lib. iii. cap. 1.) with great care; from whence they might have taken the copies of them, with the names of all their authors, which now, in many of them, are wanting. Which makes it more likely, that, after the temple and the sacred records were burnt by the king of Babylon's army, some pious persons collected as many as they could find, by inquiring among their friends, in those good men's hands who had transcribed them heretofore for their own private use, every one as he had most need. For the Songs of Zion the people were very well acquainted withal, though it lay desolate, as it appears by the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, where the Babylonians desire to hear one of them sung by the mournful captives. Who preserved them, no doubt, to their comfort in that sad condition, and added to

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them such as were made by Divine men, during its continuance, and after their return from captivity.

When, as St. Athanasius (tom. ii. p. 86.) resolves in his Synopsis (following the Hebrew tradition), Ezra put them together in one volume, as we now have them, which is not affirmed without reason: for we find that the foundation of the second temple was no sooner laid, but Ezra (as the Hebrews call him) restored the ancient custom of psalmody, or singing psalms of praise, (Ezra iii. 10, 11.) which David had appointed to accompany the sacrifices as soon as the ark was settled, (1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 17. Ecclus. l. 15, 16, &c.) and which Solomon continued after he had built the temple, and brought the ark into it, (2 Chron. v. 12, 13.)

Now, when all those bloody sacrifices were abolished, by the offering which Christ made of himself, the sacrifice of praise alone remained, as the principal service of the Christian church: several persons being inspired, not only to pray divinely, but to prophesy also, or to sing psalms and hymns of praise; as we read in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, xi. 5. xiv. 15. 26. And in the book of the Revelations, we find the apostles and elders thus employed, Rev. iv. 9—11. in which the people bare a part; as we learn from the next chapter, v. 9. 13. xiv. 1—3. So that St. Austin might tell Januarius, (Epist. cxix. cap. 18.) that "concerning singing hymns and psalms, we have instructions, and examples, and precepts, both of our Lord himself, and of his apostles." According to which, the churches of Africa sang *Divina cantica prophetarum, the Divine songs of the prophets,* while the drunken Donatists sang the composures of human wit. Nor can I see, saith he, what Christians can do more profitably, and more holily than this, when they meet together, and are not reading, preaching, or praying.

Those *Divina cantica,* no doubt, were principally the Psalms of David, in singing of which Christian people delighted above all other exercises of devotion.

The manner of their singing, also, was like that in Ezra's time: (Ezra iii. 11.) one beginning the hymn, and the rest answering the τὰ ἀκροστίχια, *extremes, or last words of it,* as the author of the Apostolical Constitutions tells us, (lib. ii. cap. 57.) which Eusebius calls the Ἀκροτελευτία τῶν ὕμνων, *the last part of the hymns,* which he expressly says were sung by the whole company, who hearkened in silence to him that sang the rest, till he came to the close, which they all repeated together, (lib. ii. Eccles. Hist. cap. 17.) And when that manner of singing the Psalms, which we now use in our choirs, was brought in by Flavianus and Diodorus, who, at Antioch, divided the choir into two parts (singing the Psalms of David, ἐκ διαδοχῆς, *alternately,* one verse by this half of the choir, and the next by the other); it thence spread itself, as it were by a joint consent, all the world over. Thus Theodoret informs us in his Eccles. Hist. book ii. chap. 19.

By which means the people came to be so well acquainted with them, that (as the same Theodoret tells us in his preface to this Book of Psalms) both in city and country this was the employment of Christian people. They that minded no other book of the Scriptures, yet had this so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they were wont to recreate themselves with the singing of these holy songs.

But I must not enlarge any further on this subject, nor fill this preface with the high commendations which the ancients give both of psalmody and of this Book of Psalms; which St. Basil (who alone would furnish me with the sense of all the rest, if it were fit to transcribe his preface to it) calls the *common treasure of all good precepts* (containing the perfections of all the rest of the Scriptures), ἐκκλησίας φωνὴ, *the voice of the church,* in which may be found, θεολογία τέλεια, *a complete body of theology.*

Which will make this Paraphrase, I hope, the more acceptable; of which it is time now that I give an account.

II. There being two ways of paraphrasing, one which keeps to the metaphors, and pursues them in more words of the like kind; another which puts those borrowed forms of speech into proper and common expressions; I have chosen the latter, and endeavoured, by giving a clear interpretation, and expressing, as well as I could, the true force and just value of every phrase, to make the original words plain and easy in our language: as may be seen particularly, xviii. 2. xix. 8, 9. In which endeavour, it is likely, I may sometimes meet with the censures of those who do not consider the import of the Hebrew words; but not be thought much faulty, I hope, by such as can and will consult them; for they will find I have carefully weighed them, and taken some pains rightly to expound them; not largely, nor making discourses upon them, but in a few words representing the mind and spirit of the Psalmist in his own way, which is devotion. And where there are two senses of which a word is capable, they will find likewise that I have endeavoured to express them both, if the matter would bear it. As, for example (to name one place for all), in Psal. cxix. 126. where we read, "It is time for thee, O Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law:" I have expounded it thus; *It is time to work to the Lord,* or *for the Lord,* &c. because all the ancient interpreters, except one, have so understood it; yet I have not neglected the other sense, which we follow, but made them agree well together. I have preferred, indeed, the first interpretation, not only for the reason now named, but because the words run most currently so in the Hebrew: and the best of the Jews have expounded them in that manner. Maimonides, for instance, who says this was one argument that moved him to write his famous book, called More Nevochim: which some might account an audacious attempt, because never undertaken, he saith, (Præfat. pag. penult.) by any of their nation since this long captivity (as he calls it); but he supported himself with this principle—that it is said concerning such sort of matters, *It is time to do something for the Lord: they having made void thy law.* And, in like manner, David Ganz, in his Chronology, says, (ad Ann. 3978.) that R. Judah Hakodesh, observing their oral law, or traditional religion, in danger to be lost, set it down in writing, though there was a prohibition against it: for סמד על הבתוב the rabbi relied upon this Scripture (thinking it would bear him out), *It is time to work to the Lord,* &c. which he expounded to this sense; Now that the law by word of mouth is like to be forgotten, and utterly lost, there must be something extraordinary done to uphold it; and so he wrote the Mischna.

I have sometimes also followed Theodoret, in the explication of some phrases; which I think good to signify, that none may be too forward to censure that for which I have

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a good authority, at least, if not a weighty reason. As, for example, Psal. lxxxix. ver. 13. I have grounded my paraphrase upon his notion, That as the *hand of God* denotes the Divine energy, so *his right hand* signifies his energy for good. And therefore, they then needing a double energy, the Psalmist remembers both his *hand* and his *right hand;* desiring to see their enemies destroyed and themselves delivered.

And if the readers will please to take the pains to compare the text with the references I have made (and enclosed) in the Paraphrase to other Scriptures, they will easily see (especially if they have any understanding in the original language) that I have not followed my own fancy in my interpretation, but had good reason for expounding the text as I have done in such places: and that this Paraphrase may serve, in many places, instead of a larger commentary upon the words. As, for example, Psal. cxlvii. 19. *his words,* I think, plainly relate to the *ten words* spoken on Mount Sinai; as I might have shewn, if I intended to write annotations.

Which if I had undertaken, it would not, perhaps, have been wholly a superfluous labour; but I might have produced something new, as I think I have done in this Paraphrase; else I should not have attempted it, especially after such an excellent person as Dr. Hammond. For therein I have interpreted some phrases otherwise than they have been understood: of which I think good here to give one example. The *son of man* and the *sons of men (ben Adam* and *bene isch)* are phrases which often occur; which I have good ground to think belong in the Scripture language to *princes;* and sometimes the *greatest of princes.* So I have expounded that known place, Psal. lxxx. 17. *The man of thy right hand, the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself;* and Psal. iv. 2. *O ye sons of men,* i. e. rulers of people; and viii. 3. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man (i. e.* the greatest of men), *that thou visitest him?* cxlvi. 3. *Put not your confidence in princes, nor in the son of man* (how great a prince, that is, soever he may be, though of never such dignity and power), *in whom there is no help.*

And thus the counsellors of Saul are called *the sons of men,* lviii. 1. and so I understand those words in Isa. li. 12. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man (that is, a prince), who shall be as grass?" where, upon the words that go before, "I am he that comforteth you," Theodoret hath this note: "I am he that cast Pharaoh and his army into the sea; he who killed many thousands of the Assyrians by one angel." From which I conclude, that he understood the following words thus: Why dost thou then fear any man, though he be never so great a tyrant, and armed with never so much power? as the king of Babylon then was, whom he calls an *oppressor* presently after, who carried them captive from their own land.

Thus, in the title of the ninth Psalm, the Septuagint, for *labben* read τοῦ υἱοῦ; and so do Symmachus Aquila, and Theodotion, as Theodoret there observes: the former of which makes it a triumphal song for the death of *that son;* which most interpreters, as I have there observed, conclude to have been that great man Goliath. The original of which language, I conceive, is to be fetched from the common manner of speech among the Hebrews, who call the chief of any kind by the name of the whole kind. As they call man *creature,* Mark xvi. 15. because the prime creature here below: so a king, or eminent person, they call the *son of man,* because the prime among the sons of men. Thus St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 13. calls magistrates *human creatures;* where the Syriac translates *sons of men,* i. e. *great men,* or *governors.* And so *man* is used, Gen. ix. 6. for a man in authority. But all this is to be understood of that expression, *ben Adam:* as for *ben Enosh,* which we also render *son of man,* (Psal. cxliv. 3.) it hath another signification; importing the wretchedness of any man's condition. And if that had been the name whereby the angel salutes Ezekiel, it might have been to put him in mind of his mean condition, though conversing with heavenly ministers; but he constantly calling him *ben Adam,* I see no reason why we should not think it denotes him to be a *great man,* highly esteemed by God; and appointed by him to judge and pass sentence upon his people, (Ezek. xx. 4.) And, in like manner, Daniel is called *son of son,* Dan. viii. 17. who in the next chapters hath the title of a *man greatly beloved,* (ix. 23. x. 11.)

And, by the way, I may observe, that from hence we may learn what to understand by that title, which our blessed Saviour so often gives himself; of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, *the Son of man,* or rather *that Son of man;* that is, the Messiah, the Lord's anointed, that great Prince God promised to bless them withal. It can have no other meaning in John v. 22. 27. (where he saith, God hath committed all judgment unto him, and given him authority to execute it, because he is the Son, or that Son, of man) than this; that he is that great person, whom God designed to be the Lord and Governor of all things. So he appeared to be, when he sent the Holy Ghost; which seems to be called *the coming of the Son of man,* Matt. x. 23. where he says, they "shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man come:" by the power, that is, of the Holy Ghost, to enable them, and give them authority, to go and preach him in all other countries, as well as there, to be the great Lord of all.

But instead of such annotations as these, which the world is already well furnished withal (particularly by the learned Dr. Hammond upon this book), I have only, in the argument to each Psalm, given a brief account, now and then, of some difficulties; and both there, and in the Paraphrase itself, pointed to such parts of the history of David, or others, as I thought the Psalms have a respect unto. Which I have followed so closely as to wave other expositions, when I thought I saw clear warrant to accommodate them to that. For, in my judgment, (to use the words of that good man Musculus, upon the hundred and thirty-second Psalm, ver. 9.) "It is the duty of every pious person, as much as he is able, to prefer that exposition, which is approved by most testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, before all others whatsoever, though in show and appearance never so plausible."

For this reason I have forborne a great many mystical and allegorical senses of the words, and rather adhered to the literal meaning, though accounted trivial and vulgar by many men; who had rather indulge to their own fancies, than be at the pains of making a diligent inquiry after the truth. For, whatsoever is pretended, it is not the easiness and meanness of the literal sense, which have made it be

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despised, and been the cause of allegorizing the Scriptures; but the great difficulty and labour that are required to the finding of it out, in many places. St. Jerome and St. Austin confess as much; who spent their younger years in mystical interpretations, as more easy studies: but when they grew old, applied themselves to historical explanations. Which St. Jerome, in his preface to the prophet Obadiah, confesses he did not understand, when he wrote upon that book in his youth; and, in plain terms, ingenuously acknowledges those mystical expositions were the work, *puerilis ingenii, of his childish wit*, at which he blushed and hanged down his head, even when others cried them up to the skies; but the historical explications (which then he set out) the work, *maturæ senectutis, of his mature age;* when he had, at least, profited thus far, as to know, with Socrates, that he was ignorant. In short, he begins that preface with the words of the apostle, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things:" and hopes this would excuse him, for interpreting that prophet allegorically in the heat of his youth; whose history he did not know. St. Austin acknowledges as much, in his first volume of Retractations, chap. 18. which I will not transcribe, but only set down the words of Martin Bucer, one of the first reformers, upon the sixth of St. Matthew; where he says, that "it would be worth a great deal to the church, if, forsaking allegories and other frivolous devices, which are not only empty, but derogate very much from the majesty of the doctrine of Christ, we would all simply, and soberly, prosecute that which our Lord intends to say to us."

This hath been my rule, though I have not so followed (I must add) the strict literal sense, as to make a mere Judaical paraphrase (which Theodoret complains, in his preface to this book, was the fault of some that went before him), but have improved the words, in all places, to a sublimer sense, where I had any direction from our Saviour or his apostles, to apply them to the things belonging to Christ's kingdom. But where I wanted their guidance, I have not taken upon me to do it (unless it be very sparingly, where the church hath thought it probable there was something intended beyond the letter), because I did not know whether the Holy Ghost, which indited the words, had respect to these times; as well as to those histories, to which I thought I saw a clear warrant to apply them.

And where there is no title to the Psalm (which St. Jerome, or one under his name, calls the *key*, to let us into the sense of it), it is not easy to tell to what history it relates: but must be acknowledged to be ἔργον μέγιστον &c. (as Origen upon the first Psalm speaks, Philocalia, cap. 2. from some learned Hebrew), a work of very great labour, to find the keys which lie scattered up and down in several parts of the Scripture: and then to fit them to the places which they are to open. In this I have taken some pains, as may be seen in the arguments to the several Psalms; in some of which, if I differ from those that have gone before me, I hope none will be so perverse as to make it a fault: for (as the true St. Jerome speaks in his preface to the Psalms, according to the Hebrew verity), since they are still desiring new pleasures, and the neighbouring seas cannot satisfy men's gluttony, "cur in solo studio Scripturarum, veteri sapore contenti sunt?" *why in the study of the Scriptures alone can they relish nothing that is new, but content themselves merely with that which tastes of antiquity?* Which I do not speak, as he proceeds, to reflect upon my predecessors, or detract from their excellent labours (to which I thankfully acknowledge, I am exceedingly beholden), but only to give an account to the readers of what I have done; that they may not think I have only transcribed what I found before said in this argument, and brought no further light to it.

Why, may some be forward to say, do you pretend, after so many monuments of learning, both ancient and modern, to bring forth any thing which hath not been said before, and said better? I answer, as Musculus doth in the like case, (Præfat. ad Lectorem.) If the treasure of the Holy Scriptures be such, that it can be drawn so dry by the diligent searches of pious and learned men, as nothing shall remain to exercise the studies of those that succeed them; if there be at any time such an effusion of God's Holy Spirit, that after that time it is in vain to labour in finding out its mind in the Holy Scriptures; if there have been in the church, after the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, men of such perfect accomplishments, that to them was imparted such an universal fulness of Divine knowledge, as to make their writings absolutely complete, so that we need do nothing but night and day study them alone; then truly I refuse not the censure of folly, nay of madness, for attempting any thing new in the Holy Scriptures, after such absolute writers. But if that most rich fountain of the Divine oracles be altogether inexhaustible, and no age can be assigned, to which alone the grace of the Holy Spirit was confined; and there were never any doctors at any time in the church, after Christ, the apostles, and prophets, of such esteem, that nothing is wanting in their writings, nothing can be rightly added to them, nothing is in them, which may be justly taken away, or changed for the better; then I do not see why we may not profitably travel in the same way that others have done, with hopes of adding more light to that which they have left us.

It is better, indeed, if a man only consults his own worldly ease and tranquillity, not to trouble himself at all about such studies; but to get a reputation merely by censuring those that are thus employed. But if a man look upon himself as consecrated to the service of Christ, and seek not what he thinks will please himself, so much as what will please his master Christ, and from him alone expect his reward, he will not think fit to be discouraged in such endeavours, by the hatred or the unkind censures which they may procure him; no, nor by the sense neither of his own infirmities, and the lapses he may have in such writings: which all truly good men will pardon, when they see an honest diligence in us to do as well as we can; and when they remember that no one man can do all things, nor nothing so as to need no correction.

Submitting therefore this work, such as it is, to the correction and amendment of those that are better able, and shall hereafter labour in this argument, I commend it to the perusal of devout Christians; hoping that the light I have given to this admirable book is so clear, if not great, that they will, by God's blessing, receive no small benefit by it. For there is nothing which David, or any of the rest, say of themselves and their condition, but by an easy ac-

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commodation may be made to serve every one of our occasions, when we are in any strait, public or private; or when we have received any remarkable deliverance. Athanasius hath said much on this subject, which I must not transcribe; nor shew how they are fitted (as Gregory Nyssen observes, lib. i. de Inscript. Psal. tom. i. p. 261.) to all persons and ages, to all conditions of life, and all manner of employments, to the state both of sickness and of health, when we are upon the land, or upon the water, so wonderful is their useful variety. But I shall conclude this preface, as Theodoret doth his commentaries upon this book:

"I beseech the readers, if I seem to have expounded it well and aptly, that they would reap the profit of it; and if I have not attained the secret mysteries of the Spirit, that they would not find fault too much; for what I could find I have freely propounded, and what I have learnt of those gone before, I endeavour to transmit to posterity; and I have taken the pains, of which others may receive the benefit without any labour. Whom I beseech and entreat to make some compensation for my pains, with their prayers; by the help of which, I may to words add deeds, and reap the blessedness which belongs to both. For he that doeth and teacheth, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. v. 19.)

"And let us praise the Lord (as St. Chrysostom also concludes) perpetually (as this book instructs us); let us never cease to give thanks in all things, both by our words and by our deeds. For this is our sacrifice, this is our oblation, this is the best liturgy, or Divine service, resembling the angelical manner of living. If we continue thus singing hymns unto him, we shall finish this life inoffensively, and enjoy those good things also which are to come. Of which, may we all be so happy as to be partakers, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, dominion, and honour, now and for ever. *Amen.*"

PART I.

PSALM I.

ARGUMENT.

The collector of these five books of Psalms, or David himself (as Apollinarius and others think), prefaces to them by a short discourse about the last end of man; just as the philosophers were wont to do in their books of morality; and as Christ himself doth in the beginning of his sermon on the mount. The end of man is blessedness; and the way to it, observance of God's law; which he lays down here as the foundation (so St. Basil conceives it) of the whole ensuing work. So that we may bestow upon this Psalm the title of ΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΜΟΣ, i. e. *Blessedness*, out of Athanasius's epistle to Marcellinus, and Theodoret's preface to this Psalm.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*] Great is the happiness of that man, unspeakably great, who hath not trod in the steps of the ungodly (who have no other rule of their actions but their own lusts and passions); or, if he hath at any time been seduced by them, timely retracted his folly, and did not persist, like those obdurate wretches, in evil courses; much less persevered so long, and proceeded so far in his impiety, as to resolve to be one of that pestilent company, who deride and scoff at all religion!

Ver. 2. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*] But his pleasure is to do the will of God, by following his counsels which he hath given in his holy laws; with which he advises and consults continually, and with unwearied study endeavours to be thoroughly acquainted with them.

Ver. 3. *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doth shall prosper.*] You may behold an emblem of this man's happiness, in those trees which are planted by such trenches as derive their water from a perpetual fountain. As they are green and flourishing all the year, and never fail to reward the gardener's pains at the time he expects to receive their fruit; so shall this pious man be ever prosperous, and in the issue reap a plentiful fruit of his labours; for there are none of his enterprises but shall succeed, according to his heart's desire.

Ver. 4. *The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*] O, how miserably will those men be deceived, who hope to thrive as well, or better, by their impiety! it is too little to say, that they shall be like trees without any moisture; the light and useless chaff, which is blown away with the wind, is a fitter resemblance of them: for so shall all their counsels, designs, and endeavours, to root themselves in the earth, be scattered and come to nothing.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*] Therefore let them not think to defend themselves when God comes to judge men according to their works: for whatsoever plea they make, or power they have, they shall certainly be overthrown. It is possible, for the present, they may seem to equal or overtop the prosperity of the righteous: but there will be a time when God will make a difference, and give the righteous a happiness wherein they shall have no share at all.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*] For he approves and highly esteems the obedience of the righteous to his holy laws, and therefore will certainly reward it: but that lewd course of life which the wicked lead, he utterly hates, and they shall infallibly perish in it.

PSALM II.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, under the history of David, whom, from a low and afflicted condition, God raised to a throne, and, notwithstanding all the opposition made against it, first by Saul, and then by others, settled him in it, contains a most illustrious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, whom God raised even from the dead, made the King of glory, and, notwithstanding all the scribes and pharisees, Herod

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and other princes, could do to hinder it, enlarged his kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Ver. 1. *WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?*] What frenzy is this, which makes the Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, (2 Sam. v. 17, &c. viii. 1, &c.) as I foresee the pharisees and their partakers will do hereafter, storm thus furiously, and bandy together with so much noise and tumult? why do they contrive to hinder that which the power of God will irresistibly bring to pass?

Ver. 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying.*] Their kings and governors are risen up, and lay their heads together, to oppose the design of God, who hath anointed me king over his people: just as Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the rulers of Israel, (Acts iv. 27.) will conspire against Christ, and seek to dethrone him, when he is made, by God the Father, King of all the world.

Ver. 3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*] Let us not submit, say they, to this new king, who pretends to reign by Divine authority; but resolutely deny to be bound to his obedience, and throw off the yoke which he and his ministers would impose upon us.

Ver. 4. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*] As if they were stronger than he, whose throne is in heaven: who, as he contemns their vain attempts, so will expose them to the scorn and derision of all those who shall behold their folly.

Ver. 5. *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*] Even then, when they think they have done their business, they shall find the tokens of the Divine vengeance against them; and if they will not desist from their opposition to him, he will utterly confound them with a destruction so terrible and so remarkable, as if he had called to them from heaven, and said,

Ver. 6. *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*] See how madly you set yourselves against my will; for in spite of all that you can do, I have anointed and set up David, who rules by my authority in the hill of Zion, where I have a peculiar residence: as in time to come (let all his enemies do what they can to hinder it) I will anoint one of his posterity to sit upon the throne of glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Ver. 7. *I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten thee.*] Such I am sure is the decree of heaven, which I here promulgate to all the world: for, from a low and poor condition, the Lord hath raised me to the highest dignity. This very day, by his order, I begin to reign, and may call it the birth-day of my kingdom: which is but a slender type of a far more strange and greater exaltation of his son Christ, whom he hath determined to raise again to life after he is dead and buried, (Acts xiii. 33. Rom. i. 4.) and then to crown with glory and honour in the heavens.

Ver. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*] If you will not believe this royal edict, you shall shortly see, not only this nation of the Jews, but the Philistines, the Edomites, Moabites, Syrians, and other remoter countries as far as Euphrates (whom God, according to his ancient grant, Exod. xxiii. 31. Ezra iv. 16. 20. hath at my request given unto me), subdued under my feet (Psal. lx. 6, &c. 2 Sam. viii.) as all the nations of the earth shall be under his son Christ.

Ver. 9. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*] They shall never be able to stand before me (much less before him): for he hath given me a sceptre so powerful (and to him, one infinitely more irresistible), that they who will not bow unto it, and be ruled by it, shall be broken in pieces as easily and irreparably as an earthen pot is with a rod of iron.

Ver. 10. *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*] And therefore let all kings and governors of the earth be advised by me; take heed what you do, and understand your own interest so well, as not to oppose the decree of Heaven; or if you have begun to set yourselves against the Lord's anointed, be not so vain as to continue in that folly, but repent, and correct your error.

Ver. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*] If you would be safe, surrender up yourselves to become his subjects, and be afraid to incur his displeasure by any disobedience. You ought indeed to rejoice, that you may be so happy as to be under the government of so great and so gracious a Prince; but that very thing should make you the more fearful to offend his majesty.

Ver. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*] To whom I counsel you to go and do your homage, and to pay him all the honour that is due to God's vicegerent; lest he grow angry at your obstinate refusal to submit unto him, and you perish in that rebellious course, when his wrath breaks out suddenly, like an unquenchable fire against you. Blessed are all they that follow this advice, and fly to him as their mighty protector and deliverer.

PSALM III.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his Son.

ARGUMENT.

Apollinarius calls this Ανγρὸν μέλος, *a mournful or lamentable song.* And so it is, if compared with the preceding; otherwise there are in it far greater expressions of faith and triumphant confidence in God, than there are of trouble and dejection of spirit, though David's condition when he wrote it was very sad and dangerous. For the title, which St. Jerome truly calls the *key of the Psalm* (whereby we are let into the sense), informs us, that it is a meditation composed in his flight from Jerusalem, when his son Absalom conspired against him, and most of the kingdom fell off from him, (2 Sam. xv. &c.) Which after his return thither he commanded to be sung in the tabernacle, in commemoration of that disconsolate condition.

And here I must note, once for all, that it cannot be certainly known what is meant by the word *Selah*, which we meet withal thrice in this short Psalm. The most probable opinion is, that it was a note in music. In which David (as Theodoret observes upon this word) be-

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ing a very great master, he set some of his Psalms himself, to be sung to such instruments as he thought were most agreeable to the notes. But that music being now lost, some interpreters have wholly omitted this word *Selah*, as I shall also do.

Ver. 1. *LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.*] O Lord, who changest not, what an amazing change is this! I who in a Divine manner was set by thee upon thy throne, and lately triumphed over so many foreign countries, (Psal. ii. 6—8.) now see great armies of my own subjects raised against me; and conspiring with my son, not only to pull the crown from my head, but to take away my life.

Ver. 2. *Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.*] The general cry is, that I am lost, and that thou, who wast wont to be my helper, and in whom I always made my boast, hast quite forsaken me, as my people have done universally.

Ver. 3. *But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*] But this (how sad soever it be) shall never shake my confidence in thee, O Lord, whom I still behold surrounding me with thy almighty protection: and therefore I will not cease to glory, and make my boast in thee; but hope (though now I am in a sorrowful condition) that thou wilt make me joyful again, and raise me out of this dejected estate to my former dignity.

Ver. 4. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.*] Why should I doubt of it? when I never yet cried unto the Lord, either in this or any former distress, but he sent me relief from that place, where he, having made his special residence, would have us thither direct our prayers.

Ver. 5. *I laid me down and slept; I awaked: for the Lord sustained me.*] He hath already so quieted and composed my mind, that in the midst of this dreadful danger I laid me down securely, and slept profoundly, and awaked, as I slept, without any fear, or any disturbance: for the Lord supported and upheld my spirit, in a firm confidence of his careful providence over me.

Ver. 6. *I will not be afraid of ten thousand of people that have set themselves against me round about.*] And therefore, were I beset with as many nations, as I see men now encamp themselves on all sides against me, I should not be at all daunted at it.

Ver. 7. *Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*] But only address myself to thee, saying, Defer no longer, O Lord, but let them see thou hast not forsaken me. Deliver me, O my God, from these rebellious subjects, whom I beseech thee to discomfit and put to shame, as thou hast done many other powerful enemies, who most impiously have sought with eager desire to devour me.

Ver. 8. *Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*] Thou alone art the author of all happiness, and therefore unto thee I flee to save and preserve me from this conspiracy: not that I may live to be revenged, but to do good unto thy people, whose prosperity I wish and will seek, though never so ungrateful and undutiful to me their sovereign.

PSALM IV.

To the chief Musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

We can learn no more from this title, but that David was the author of this Psalm; and that he delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung to the stringed instruments. But when or upon what occasion he penned it, is not certainly known, though the matter of it makes it probable, it was in the same (or the like) distress wherein he made the foregoing Psalm.

Ver. 1. *HEAR me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*] O my God, the most righteous judge, who knowest the justice of my cause, and art the protector of oppressed innocence, vouchsafe to give me a gracious answer now that I cry unto thee for help against my enemies. Thou hast heretofore made an open way for my escape out of the sorest straits and greatest dangers; which makes me hope thou wilt still take pity upon me, and hear the humble petition which I put up unto thee.

Ver. 2. *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*] I am confident my desire is granted; and therefore do you hearken unto me, O ye rulers of the people, by whose authority such multitudes are drawn into this conspiracy: cease to defame my government, (2 Sam. xv. 3, &c.) and break off your vain endeavours to dethrone me. Why do you delight to weary yourselves in the pursuit of such fallacious counsels, and to employ so much industry in inventing calumnies, and spreading lies to draw the people from me?

Ver. 3. *But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.*] Know that it is not in your power by all these arts to depose me; for I did not come to my kingdom by chance, nor by your choice, but by the special appointment of God; who, having so highly favoured me, that he hath selected me out of all other men, and in a wonderful manner advanced me to be his vicegerent; he will no doubt maintain me in my place, and graciously preserve me when I implore his help from all the enemies that can assault me.

Ver. 4. *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.*] Dread his displeasure, I beseech you, though you fear not my power; and let not your anger at me make you any longer offend him, by persisting in this rebellion, into which you have run rashly: but if you will debate the matter calmly within yourselves, and, when all the bustle and tumult of the day are over, ask yourselves at night what ground there is for it; I doubt not you will find reason to lay down your arms and be quiet.

Ver. 5. *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.*] As for you, my friends, that adhere still to me, though you are driven with me from God's holy place, yet fear nothing; but only take care to observe strictly all the rules of righteousness, which are the most acceptable sacrifices you can offer to the Lord; and then

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confide in him; and though your forces be few, doubt not of the victory.

Ver. 6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*] You are desirous, I know, to see peace and settlement restored; of which many are apt to despair, saying, Who shall make us so happy? But do thou, O Lord, look favourably upon us and bless us, and then I am surer of it, than if I saw the most powerful armies appear, with banners displayed, for my succour.

Ver. 7. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*] The very thoughts of it, this small glimpse of thy love, hath already filled my heart with such joy, that it far exceeds all the pleasure my enemies can take in seeing their barns full of corn, and their presses overflow with wine.

Ver. 8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.*] Nor can they take their rest more securely than I; for though encompassed with these dangers, I no sooner lay me down, but I fall asleep; because when I have no other guard about me, thou, Lord, alone art a sufficient defence unto me.

PSALM V.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David (but whether when he was persecuted by Saul or by Absalom, I cannot certainly determine), and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, after his troubles were over, to be sung in parts to the organ; in commemoration of that sad condition, and the devout confidence he placed in God of deliverance out of it.

Ver. 1. *GIVE ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation.*] Thou seest, O Lord, unto what grievous straits I am reduced: let them move thee to grant me my request, and to have regard to the silent groans and sighs, whereby I call upon thee for relief.

Ver. 2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto thee will I pray.*] To thee I appeal as my sovereign Lord and supreme Judge; from whose almighty power I earnestly beg protection, and from whose justice I humbly implore the vindication of my innocence.

Ver. 3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*] And thou wilt be as speedy, I hope, in thy help and succour, as I am early in my prayer: for the first thing I do, is to address myself to thee. I no sooner awake, but I dispose myself to wait on thee (as an humble suitor at the gate of thy mercy), and expect what thou wilt be pleased to do for me.

Ver. 4. *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee.*] Who wilt not fail, I am confident, to answer my expectations; for thou art a most righteous judge, who art so far from approving this unjust persecution of me (or rebellion against me), that thou abhorrest such wicked practices. They may prosper for a little time in these evil courses, but shall have no place in thy favour.

Ver. 5. *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*] Thou wilt condemn them to suffer the punishment of their folly and madness; and banish those from thy presence, who in their blind rage have driven me from my habitation: for all such wicked doers are odious to thee.

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing; the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.*] Thou wilt utterly destroy those that abuse their tongues to tell lies, whereby they defame and calumniate my government: their bloody designs, which they seek to compass by fraud and treachery, make them abominable to the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 7. *But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple.*] But I, whom they have driven not only from my own house, but (which is far worse) from thine, hope, by thine infinite goodness towards me, to be restored again to go into thy courts; and there, with the humblest reverence, to worship thee, towards the place where thou hast set the monument of thy presence with us.

Ver. 8. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*] And in the mean time, thou wilt be my guide and conductor in the way of thy commandments, which are the rule of righteousness; that my enemies, who seek for something to colour their hatred to me, may have nothing to object against me. They would gladly see me trip, and they watch for my halting: and therefore do thou make thy way so plain before me, and order my goings so steadfastly, that I may never stumble, much less fall, and give them any advantage over me.

Ver. 9. *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*] For with what triumph would they blaze abroad my real faults, who now stick not to tell all manner of lies of me? their hearts are perpetually hatching the most malicious and mischievous stories, which they utter with open mouth, gaping for the destruction of the innocent: to whom, when they speak fair, and put on a guise of friendship, it is with an intent to devour them.

Ver. 10. *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.*] O thou most righteous Judge, pronounce that sentence of condemnation against them which they deserve. Let their own devices, whereby they seek to ruin me, destroy themselves; and disperse them, because of their multiplied impieties. For it is thy cause more than mine that is now disputed, while they reject him whom thou hast appointed the king of thy people.

Ver. 11. *But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.*] This will excite all those who are faithful to thee, and confide in nothing but thy merciful protection, to rejoice and triumph perpetually in thy praise. They will be encouraged by thy wonderful goodness and power appearing in my deliverance, to hope thou wilt protect and succour them also; and never fail to fill the hearts of all those that truly love thee, with the highest joy in thee.

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Ver. 12. *For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*] For thou, Lord, who art faithful and true, hast engaged thyself, by thy gracious promise, to do good unto the righteous: whom thou lovest and delightest in; and therefore wilt crown with thy favour, and encircle him, as with an impenetrable shield, against all the darts of his enemies.

PSALM VI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

When David laboured under some grievous disease, he made his complaints to God, and deprecated his displeasure, according to the sense of this Psalm. Which he composed, it is likely, after his recovery: and ordered the master of music in the tabernacle, to cause it to be sung to the harp of eight strings. That seems to be the best interpretation of *Sheminith*, which the Chaldee follows; and it may be justified from what we read 1 Chron. xv. 21. Of *Neginoth*, see Psalm iv. By way of accommodation, the words of this Psalm have been applied to the sickness of the mind; but, upon the former account also, it may be called one of the penitential Psalms.

Ver. 1. *O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*] O Lord, who delightest in mercy, moderate, I beseech thee, thy sharp correction; and do not proceed to inflict upon me the severest marks of thy displeasure.

Ver. 2. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.*] I am brought very low already, my strength faileth me, and every joint in my body trembles; and therefore now, O Lord, thy mercy will come very seasonably. Good Lord, from whom alone I expect a cure, let it be sufficient that I have suffered so much already, and vouchsafe to heal me.

Ver. 3. *My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?*] For this sore affliction, and the dread of thy farther displeasure, have struck into my soul also an exceeding great consternation; and how long it will continue, thou, Lord, alone knowest.

Ver. 4. *Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake.*] My enemies think thou hast quite forsaken me: convince them of their error, O Lord, by being reconciled, and restoring to me the kindness thou wast wont to shew me. Deliver me from this anguish and fear, and (though not for my merits, yet) for thy mercy save me from going down into the grave.

Ver. 5. *For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*] For there I can have no opportunity to do thee service; the dead being utterly unable to commemorate thy wonderful works, and propagate the memory of them to posterity. As long as I live I will shew forth thy praise; but who can celebrate thy name, and instruct thy people, in the grave?

Ver. 6. *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears.*] To that silent place I shall soon descend, unless thou make haste to deliver me; for I am tired out with these pains under which I groan. The night, which is wont to quiet all men's grief, and lay their troubles asleep, is to me so restless and uneasy, that the incessant agonies I am in dissolve me into sweat; and I do nothing but pour out floods of tears.

Ver. 7. *Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*] Which have made such furrows in my face, that my countenance hath lost all its beauty, and looks like that of a consumptive man, who is dropping into his grave. I am worn away with the mere grief and indignation of seeing all mine enemies insulting over me, and with joy waiting for my death.

Ver. 8. *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.*] But why am I thus concerned at their behaviour; and torment myself, as if my life depended on their pleasure; which is in the hand of God alone; who pities my mournful condition, and will grant me that which I have sought with so many tears? And therefore go your way, ye evil-doers, and stay no longer here expecting my death. Desist from all your wicked contrivances against me, and be not so vain as to hope to triumph over me.

Ver. 9. *The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.*] The Lord hath not rejected me, as you imagine; but is graciously pleased both with my deprecation of his displeasure, and with my petitions to him for his favour.

Ver. 10. *Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.*] And therefore I tell my enemies once more, that they shall all be ashamed of their vain hopes to see me dead. I shall live to disappoint them, and make them terribly afraid: nay, they shall make a sudden retreat, and be confounded to see themselves so shamefully defeated.

PSALM VII.

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the Words (or business) *of Cush the Benjamite.*

ARGUMENT.

An excellent Psalm, composed by David to commemorate the loving-kindness of the Lord upon occasion of some calumnies and false accusations; wherein Cush, one of the same tribe with Saul (and probably one of his courtiers or captains, if not one of his kinsmen), had charged David with some very great crime; of treason, it is likely, and conspiracy against Saul. Athanasius, indeed (as we find in some fragments of his upon the Psalms), thinks that David made this χαριστήριον ᾠδην, as he calls it, when Hushai (whom he takes for Cush) had defeated the good counsel of Ahithophel, by a discourse he made to shew it was not safe to set upon so warlike a prince as David, without a greater force than Absalom had at present; whereby he saved David from certain ruin. But I see nothing in the Psalm to give a colour to this conjecture; for the words therein mentioned were against David, not in his favour. The name of Hushai also is otherways written, and he is called an Archite, not a Benjamite; which St. Basil (whose opinion this was) endeavours to solve, by saying he was called Benjameni, because he

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managed his matters so dexterously, in overthrowing the counsel of Ahithophel. But that is only a piece of wit; and the conjecture of Valentine Schindler seems to me more probable; that by Cush, he secretly notes (by a change of letters) Saul himself, the son of Kish; who could no more alter his mind, full of hatred to David, than a man of Cush, or an Ethiopian, could his skin or complexion.

Ver. 1. *O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.*] O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most gracious God, and defended my innocence against those that have falsely accused me, I ought not to doubt of thy continued care and love towards me: and therefore fly unto thee, with an humble confidence in thy almighty goodness, that thou wilt preserve and deliver me from this new persecution which is raised against me.

Ver. 2. *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*] For if thou dost not protect me, I am no more able to stand before Saul than a lamb before a lion: so great is his power, and so implacable his rage, that if thou sufferest me to fall into his hands, there is no creature can rescue me, but he will infallibly destroy me.

Ver. 3. *O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands.*] And let him destroy me, O Lord, if I be guilty of that whereof I am accused. Thou art the most righteous judge of all, and to thee I here again most solemnly appeal, as I have done before him, (1 Sam. xxiv. 12. 15.) desiring that thou wilt judge between us. If I have conspired against him, or had any design to do him hurt, (as he was made to believe, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) if any such thing hath so much as entered into my thoughts:

Ver. 4. *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy).*] If I have either injured him when he was kind to me, or sought to be revenged of him since he has injured me: (no, I abhorred to take revenge, so far was I from seeking it, when he fell into my hand, and spared him twice when it was in my power to have killed him, who causelessly endeavoured to kill me, 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.)

Ver. 5. *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.*] Then I beg no mercy; let him go on to be my enemy; let him pursue me till he apprehend me, and execute his desire upon me. I refuse not to die; nay, to be trod under foot like dirt with the greatest contempt; and to be as much reproached when I am dead, as I have been honoured alive.

Ver. 6. *Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself, because of the rage of mine enemies; and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.*] But if I be innocent in this matter (as thou, Lord, knowest I am), then I beseech thee to shew thy displeasure at this unjust proceeding. Let my enemies know that thou art the sovereign Lord of all, by suppressing them now that they rage thus furiously. Thou hast appointed judges upon earth to distribute justice, and relieve the oppressed; but hast reserved the supreme judgment to thyself, even over them as well as others: and therefore I beseech thee to take cognizance of my cause, and issue out thy orders speedily for my deliverance from this persecution.

Ver. 7. *So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about; for their sakes therefore return thou on high.*] Which will draw all the people to make their resort to thee, and wait upon thee, till thou dost them justice. For that reason ascend thy judgment-seat again, and, as thou hast done formerly, vindicate me from these calumnies, and assert my innocence.

Ver. 8. *The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*] The Sovereign of the world will not fail to dispense equal justice unto all, according to their works. Of which I beseech thee, O Lord, to give an example in me, who desire no greater favour than to be disposed of according to my innocence in this matter. Thou hast designed indeed a kingdom for me: but let me lose it, if ever I entertain a disloyal thought against him who now enjoys it.

Ver. 9. *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.*] I leave it to thee to perform thy own purposes; who hast long borne with the wicked in their unjust proceedings, but wilt at last put a stop to them, and settle the righteous, whom they injuriously persecute from place to place, in a peaceable possession of what thou hast promised. For thou, Lord, discernest the most secret thoughts and desires of them both; and as thou canst not be deceived with specious shows, so thou wilt not be corrupted, either by fear or favour, to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 10. *My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.*] That is my comfort, none but God, the Judge of all, can either absolve or condemn me; and he knows so well the sincerity of my heart, that I assure myself from him of protection and deliverance.

Ver. 11. *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*] For he is so just a judge, that he will defend the cause of the righteous, and never be persuaded to take part with the wicked; with whom he is highly displeased all the time that he forbears to strike him, and cut him off in his evil courses.

Ver. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.*] And if he will not repent, as he is invited by that forbearance, he shall be punished at last with so much the greater severity; because he would take no warning, but went on confidently, notwithstanding the vengeance he was told was preparing for him.

Ver. 13. *He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*] Vengeance, which will certainly come, though it stay long, and not fail to do execution: for it is decreed in heaven (if they do not repent), and will pierce through the very heart of Saul, and all the rest of my fierce and outrageous persecutors.

Ver. 14. *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.*] See here the folly of this calumniator; who wickedly plots my ruin, and hath formed most mischievous designs against my life; which shall all miscarry, and deceive his expectation.

Ver. 15. *He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.*] And he shall not escape so nei-

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ther; for beside the shame of not being able to compass his design, he shall suffer that himself which he laboured to do to me. Just as you see sometimes a man fall into the pit which was digged with his own hands; so shall he fall upon the sword which himself hath drawn, (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.)

Ver. 16. *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*] The mischief which with so much pains he contrived against me, shall be retorted upon that head which projected it: all his violence and cruel persecutions, wherewith he thought to oppress me, shall fall down (like a stone thrown into the air) upon himself, and crush him to pieces.

Ver. 17. *I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.*] Which shall afford matter of perpetual praise to me; who will most thankfully acknowledge not only the power, but the just judgment of God, and his faithfulness to his word. With the greatest delight and joy shall my songs celebrate the glorious majesty of the Lord, which far surmounts our highest thoughts and thanksgivings.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The Targum takes the word *Gittith* to denote that this Psalm was to be sung to a harp which David brought with him from Gath. Others think it to be only a note in music; or to have relation to the time of vintage. But Theodoret looking upon it (as indeed it seems to be), ψαλμὸς ἐπινίκιος, *a psalm of triumph to God*, the author of some great victory he had gotten, I take it to have been composed by David, and delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle, after he had overthrown that haughty insolent giant, Goliath of Gath. Which is very agreeable to the matter of the Psalm, and a lively emblem of Christ's conquest over our great enemy the devil.

Ver. 1. O *LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*] O Lord, the Sovereign of the world, who art graciously pleased to own us in a peculiar manner to be thy subjects, who can behold the wonders of thy works, and the wisdom of thy providence, and not be astonished at the incomparable greatness and splendour of thy majesty? which all the earth proclaims with the highest praises; but cannot be contained within the spacious bounds of the heavens, whose glorious brightness it far surpasses.

Ver. 2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*] What an amazing wonder is it, that thou shouldest enable the weakest of men to do the greatest and most praiseworthy things! and particularly hast now assisted me (who, in comparison of Goliath, am but an infant) with power and strength to subdue that mighty giant! It is enough to confound all the enemies, and to stop the mouths of the most pernicious opposers of thee and of thy people: as the far more to be celebrated works of the Messiah and his disciples, when they shall but speak the word, shall confound even the devil himself, that great enemy of thine, and tormentor of mankind.

Ver. 3. *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.*] Who are extremely stupid if they do not most thankfully acknowledge thy singular love to them. For when I seriously look up to thy celestial habitation, and consider the vastness of that admirable structure, and behold also those lights which thou hast placed there in beautiful order,

Ver. 4. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*] I know not what to say, but am perfectly astonished to think that thou, whose greatness I see so visibly in the heavens, shouldest condescend so far as to shew such grace and favour as thou dost to this wretched creature man: particularly to me, who am the meanest of my brethren. Lord, what am I, that thou shouldest work such salvation by my hands? Nay, what is the greatest prince in the world, that thou shouldest thus honour him? But that thou shouldest advance our mortal nature so highly in *that* Son of man, the Lord Christ, whom the world will vilify and despise, exceeds all wonder, and ought to be the matter of our perpetual admiration.

Ver. 5. *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*] Thou hast raised man to such a dignity, and honoured him so highly, (particularly me, whom thou hast used as thy minister to punish that insulting giant, who defied thy armies, 1 Sam. xvii.) that he is not much inferior to the celestial hosts: as shall be more clearly seen in thy Son Christ, whom thou hast determined to advance far above the highest angels in heaven, after he hath for a short space been much beneath them, by submitting himself to a poor condition in our flesh, that he might lay down his life for man, (Heb. xi. 6, 7, &c.)

Ver. 6. *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*] Whose glory is great, even in the dominion thou hast given him over all thy creatures in this lower world: (though this be nothing comparable to the exaltation of the great Son of man, under whose feet thou hast put in subjection all creatures whatsoever, even those in the highest heavens.) There is nothing here but he hath a power over it, and finds means to make it subject to his pleasure.

Ver. 7. *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field.*] Not only the beasts that are tame, such as sheep and oxen, but those that are wild, even tigers, bears, and lions.

Ver. 8. *The fowl of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*] Yea, and the fowls of the air cannot fly so high, but he hath ways to reach them; nor can the fishes in lakes, or rivers, or those in the deepest ocean, exempt themselves from his dominion.

Ver. 9. *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*] All which moves me again to cry out and conclude as I began, in the highest admiration of thy most powerful wisdom and goodness, saying, O mighty Lord, our most gracious Governor, who can comprehend the excellent greatness of thy majesty? O how transcendent is thy loving-kindness in all thou hast done, and wilt do for man! How loudly ought the whole world to sound forth thy praise!

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PSALM IX.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben.
A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm which David composed and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, when he was in some great distress: (ver. 13.) wherein he commemorates God's former deliverance of him; both when he killed Goliath, and got frequent victories afterward over the Philistines, and other enemies of Israel, (ver. 11. 15.)

I mention Goliath, because, among the various opinions about *Muth-labben*, I find none so probable as theirs, who think it hath some relation to him: to whom there are three ways of applying those Hebrew words. All of them by *Almuth*, understand to be meant *upon the death:* and then *Labben*, some think, signifies *the son*, that is, a great man, as I have expounded in my preface to this work. Others render it *the white;* that is, an illustrious, noble person, or one famous in arms, as Goliath was. Others render it *intermediate;* which agrees also to that champion, who came out and stood *between* the two armies, and defied Israel, (1 Sam. xvii. 4, &c.) Thus the Chaldee paraphrase here interprets. But that this Psalm was not made just after David's victory over him, with respect merely to his death, is apparent from the mention of Zion, ver. 11. 14. which was not then in the hands of Israel. And therefore he only calls to mind (as I said in the beginning) this deliverance, upon some fresh occasion he had to implore the mighty assistance of the Divine Power, which then first began to appear to him.

Ver. 1. *I WILL praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.*] I will acknowledge, O Lord of heaven and earth, thy omnipotent goodness, with the heartiest devotion and entire affection to thee. Nor will I content myself to praise thee for this last victory alone, but on this occasion commemorate all the wonders thou hast formerly done for me.

Ver. 2. *I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.*] The thoughts of which are so pleasing and delightful to me, that I cannot but be exceeding glad and leap for joy, while I celebrate with my songs thy supreme majesty; whose power infinitely excels the united force of all creatures upon earth.

Ver. 3. *When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.*] It was thou who madest my enemies turn their backs, and seek for safety in flight: (1 Sam. xvii. 51.) and the dread of thee so pursued them, that they stumbled and fell down wounded, (ver. 52.) and were destroyed, because they saw thee appear against them.

Ver. 4. *For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne judging right.*] For in that great controversy between us and the Philistines, (1 Sam. xvii. 9.) wherein I stood up against Goliath, thou didst take my part (as thou hast done since in many other battles), asserting the cause which I defended, and openly giving judgment on my side.

Ver. 5. *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.*] Thou hast given a terrible rebuke to the audacious insolence of those nations; thou hast cut off their daring champion, who so impiously defied thy armies, and cursed me by his gods: thou hast put them to shame, and made their names infamous to all generations.

Ver. 6. *O thou enemy! destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.*] O thou insulting enemy, who in thy own thoughts hadst completely devoured us, where are the utter desolations thou threatenedst to our country? and the cities which thou intendest to lay even with the ground? How vain were thy hopes of leaving no remembrance of them but in their ruins.

Ver. 7. *But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.*] Such shall be the end of all the rest of my enemies, who can never prevail against the Lord. For, though earthly thrones may tumble down, he and his throne cannot possibly be disturbed, but remain fixed for ever; and his justice is as immutable, which he will equally dispense to all.

Ver. 8. *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*] For his jurisdiction is not limited, nor can his justice be corrupted: but the whole world is under his government, and no wicked man is so powerful, that he should be able to escape his vengeance, which shall pursue every one of them, and render to him exactly according as he deserves.

Ver. 9. *The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*] And, as he will punish the wicked, be their authority never so great; so he will preserve the righteous, be they never so helpless. They may safely fly unto him for sanctuary against the unjust persecutions of their mighty oppressors, and he will give them seasonable relief in all their distresses.

Ver. 10. *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*] All they that are acquainted with thee, and with the merciful and just methods of thy providence, will consent to this; and, abhorring all undue ways of saving themselves in troublesome times, will heartily confide in thee: for it was never known, that thou, Lord, hast left any man destitute of thy help, who hath piously made his constant addresses to thee.

Ver. 11. *Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*] Let them join, therefore, their songs with mine, and praise the Lord, who dwells among us by his special presence in the sanctuary. Let us make all the world know what wonderful things he hath done for us, that they may also learn to trust in him.

Ver. 12. *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*] Who, though he may seem to wink for a time at the cruelty of violent men, yet will call them at last to a strict account for all the innocent blood they have shed, and for their unjust and unmerciful usage of meek and humble persons; whose cry he never forgets (though he doth not presently answer it), but takes a fit time to be avenged of their oppressors.

Ver. 13. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that*

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liftest me up from the gates of death.] In confidence of this, I cry unto thee now, O Lord, for my seasonable relief, in this necessitous condition to which my enemies have reduced me. O merciful God, who hast delivered me from the greatest dangers, from the lion and the bear, from Goliath, who thought to give my flesh to the birds and the beasts, (1 Sam. xvii. 44.) from Saul, and all others who were ready to swallow me up; cast a gracious eye upon my present distress, and bring me out of it.

Ver. 14. *That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*] That I may go into thy sanctuary (which now thou hast placed in Zion), and there, in the most frequent assemblies of thy people, add this to all the rest of thy praises, that thou hast heard my cry. O how joyful shall I be! how shall I triumph, when I magnify thy power in my deliverance!

Ver. 15. *The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.*] Which the experience I have had of thy goodness makes me comfortably expect: for I have often seen all the designs and contrivances of the Philistines and other nations against thy people, to conclude in nothing but their own utter ruin; their engines recoil upon themselves, as Goliath was slain by his own sword.

Ver. 16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.*] This is a thing notorious to all, and for which thou art renowned. By this thou convincest the minds of those that deny thy providence. Nor is there any thing more admirable, and worthy of our meditation, than this thy righteous judgment upon the ungodly; when they are entangled in their own devices, and, contrary to all expectation, bring upon themselves that destruction which they had prepared for others.

Ver. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*] This makes me confident that I am not deceived, when I look to see these wicked men, who now seek my ruin, precipitate themselves into the pit of destruction. Nay, so shall all those people perish (though never so numerous), who, forgetting what God had done to others, proceed on in the same impious designs against the innocent.

Ver. 18. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*] For the Lord, in due time, will shew that he doth not neglect them when they are poor and helpless, though for the present he defer to relieve them. Let them patiently wait upon him under their affliction, and he will not fail their expectation.

Ver. 19. *Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*] And may I desire thee, O Lord, to delay no longer? O suffer not weak and wretched man to domineer on this fashion, nay, boast of his victories; but call all those nations that oppose thee to an account, and condemn them to that punishment which they deserve.

Ver. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men.*] Strike a terror into them, O Lord, by some sharp vengeance inflicted on them. Shake out of their mind the vain opinion they have of themselves and of their power; and make the nations sensible they are but frail and miserable men.

PSALM X.

ARGUMENT.

It is not known by whom, or on what occasion, this Psalm was composed: but it is a most lively description of the insolency of wicked atheistical men, when they have power, and are in authority; which they abuse to the oppression of the meaner or weaker sort, and make no conscience by what arts they bring their designs about. Against whom the Psalmist humbly beseeches the Divine vengeance, and rests confident they shall be suppressed.

Ver. 1. *WHY standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?*] It is strange, O Lord, to see thee, who hast done us the peculiar honour to say we have thee nigh unto us on all occasions, (Deut. iv. 7.) now withdraw thyself to such a distance from us, that there is no sign of thy coming to our relief. It perplexes our thoughts, and we cannot find the reason of it, that now, in these grievous straits, which seem to us the fittest opportunity, thou dost not appear for our deliverance.

Ver. 2. *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*] If our great affliction do not move thy pity towards us, yet the intolerable pride and insolent rage of the wicked, we are prone to expect, should meet with a rebuke from thy just indignation. Especially since he oppresses the poor, who have no friend but thee alone; whose glory also it is to humble arrogant men, by making those very devices cast them down, whereby they thought to ruin others, and exalt themselves. O that we might see them fall in this remarkable manner!

Ver. 3. *For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.*] For whilst the wicked prospers thus in all his designs, he is not only encouraged in those evil courses, but glories in them, and brags that he can do what he lists. Nay, it doth not suffice him to do evil himself, but he commends and praises the unjust extortions and rapines of other violent men; whom he accounts happy, though the Lord abhors them.

Ver. 4. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*] But it is to no purpose to tell him how the Lord abhors them; for, scornfully rejecting all such good admonitions, he will not so much as inquire and consider whether there be a God or not: but rather boldly concludes there is no God, or, if there be, that he cares not what we do.

Ver. 5. *His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*] And therefore, though all his business be to molest and torment his neighbours, and he is always bringing forth some mischief or other, yet that thou wilt judge him for it is the farthest thing from his thoughts: and as for those men that are his adversaries, he contemns them all, and values them not a straw.

Ver. 6. *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*] He confidently promises himself that none shall be able to disturb him; and rests secure he shall always be thus prosperous, which makes him resolve he will never alter his wicked course of life, let God or man do what they can against him.

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Ver. 7. *His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud; under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*] Nor sticks at any thing that may serve his ends: for he makes no conscience to call for one curse after another upon himself, to confirm those oaths or promises which he never intends to keep; but by this impious means to deceive and cheat those that rely upon his word. He speaks very fair; but it is only to hide the mischievous wickedness which lurks in his heart.

Ver. 8. *He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*] And if he cannot this way compass all his designs, he makes no scruple to rob and kill upon the highway: near unto which he lurks, and in covert places, where nobody sees him, shoots at the innocent traveller; especially when he sees he is defenceless, and hath none to help him.

Ver. 9. *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*] He lies as close as a lion in his den; and is as cruel when he hath caught his prey. A fowler is not more cunning to draw the birds to his net, than he to get poor helpless men into his power, that he may devour them.

Ver. 10. *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*] For he can counterfeit himself (if occasion serve) to be a harmless traveller; and look so humbly and innocently, that the poor man, on whom he intends to seize, suspecting no danger, will lie the more open to his sudden and violent assault.

Ver. 11. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.*] From which God himself, he thinks, will not protect him. They call him (saith he within his heart) the Omnipotent, and the poor commit themselves unto him: but what cares he for them? he regards them not, and will never call me to any account for what I have done against them.

Ver. 12. *Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*] Confute these blasphemies, O Lord; and delay no longer, O thou omnipotent Judge of the world, to appear in just displeasure against them. Stretch forth thy hand to confound these violent oppressors, and to relieve all thy afflicted servants.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*] What is it, but thy long-suffering, and bearing so much with them, that makes the wicked thus insolently despise thee? He concludes, thou wilt never punish him, because thou art so patient with him.

Ver. 14. *Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*] I doubt not, indeed, that thou takest notice of their villany, and that thou wilt requite them in their kind, for all the mischief and vexation of which they have been the authors. The poor have reason to commend their cause to thee; and to expect that thou wilt do them right, who art the protector of the weak and friendless, who have nothing to rely upon but thy goodness.

Ver. 15. *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*] But the wicked will never believe this, as long as they are able to do mischief; and therefore I beseech thee to despoil them of all their power to hurt and oppress thy people. Be avenged on them for their wickedness, after which they fancy thou wilt not inquire, and let there be no footsteps of it remaining.

Ver. 16. *The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.*] Thou canst easily do it, being the same everlasting King, by whose authority and power the seven impious nations were expelled out of this land.

Ver. 17. *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.*] And I believe thou wilt do it, O Lord, who hast so often since granted the desire of the afflicted. Thou wilt dispose their heart humbly to wait upon thee, and then vouchsafe them a favourable audience;

Ver. 18. *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*] When they pray thee to assert the right of the fatherless, and other poor helpless people, and to punish their insolent oppressors: that those tyrants, sprung out of the earth, and who deserve to be tumbled down thither again, may be no longer terrible to them.

PSALM XI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, the title tells us, was composed by David: and very likely (as Theodoret and others conjecture) when Saul persecuted him, and some advised him to seek his safety in flight: or rather, when Saul began to have evil designs against him; and he was invited by some, who pretended friendship to him, to a place of safety in the mountainous country of Judea. When he came to the crown, he delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung there in remembrance of what then passed between his friends, him, and God Almighty, in whom he placed his hope.

Ver. 1. *IN the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*] It is not in fortresses or friends that I place my confidence, and hope for safety, but only in the Lord, who hath anointed me his king. On him I rely; and therefore do not put me in fear, and bid me fly away thus speedily, like a timorous bird before the fowler, to your place of security.

Ver. 2. *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*] Behold, say you, the danger wherein thou art is no less imminent, than when a fowler hath bent his bow, and fitted his arrow upon the string, and, lying close, hath the bird in his eye, whom he means to shoot: for just so have Saul and his wicked counsellors laid their plot on a sudden to destroy thee.

Ver. 3. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*] And if men have no regard to laws and public decrees, which are the foundation of human society, but will boldly violate all known and standing rules of justice and truth, what security can an honest man have? or what should he do, but make haste away from this court, where they act so arbitrarily, and are so perfidious?

Ver. 4. *The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of*

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men.] My answer is, that the world is not governed by chance, nor can men carry things just as they please: but the Lord, into whose holy palace no unjust counsels can possibly enter, and whose throne is infinitely above that of the highest king on earth: he, I say, is the supreme and most righteous ruler of all affairs; and no mischief can be so secretly contrived, no wicked design so artificially dissembled, but it lies open before his eyes, and he sees through it: nor need he take any pains to discover it; for at the first glance, as we speak, he perfectly discerns how all men are inclined, and looks to the very bottom of their hearts.

Ver. 5. *The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.*] And he may think fit to try the fidelity of him whom he knows to be upright, by many adversities; that he may afterward give him the more illustrious testimonies of his approbation and love. But whatsoever success the wicked, and he that delights in doing mischief, may have for the present, he is most hateful to God; and he will without fail severely punish him, for abusing his power to oppression and violent dealing.

Ver. 6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*] The wicked may think themselves very secure, because they are so cunning and so strong; but how can they defend themselves against the Lord, who hath innumerable ways to ensnare them when they least think of it; and can as unexpectedly overthrow all their forces, as, when the heavens are most serene, a sudden storm of thunder and lightning, and tempestuous blasts, arises, and tears up the trees by the roots? Thus the Sodomites, thus the Egyptians, perished; and such measure will the wise Dispenser of all punishments mete to these violent oppressors.

Ver. 7. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*] For the Lord, who is just in his own nature, and in all his ways, loves none but those who are like himself: and therefore he will plague all injurious persons, but with special favour defend and reward all upright men, who steadfastly keep (notwithstanding all the injuries they receive) in the paths of righteousness.

PSALM XII.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the sixth Psalm, upon the harp with eight strings. The occasion of it is not expressed; but it is a sad complaint of the corrupt manners of that age, (especially of the court of Saul, ver. 3.) in which it was hard to find an honest, plain-dealing man, in whom one might confide. Some think it aims partly at Doeg, and such-like courtiers: partly at the Ziphites, and such perfidious people in the country, who, promising him their friendship (as Theodoret understands it), would have most basely betrayed him unto Saul, his declared enemy.

Ver. 1. *HELP, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*] Lord, be thou my safeguard, for there is no such thing as kindness and friendship to be found among men: I dare trust myself with none of them; for there is not so much as any truth and honesty left in the world.

Ver. 2. *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak.*] One neighbour cannot with safety believe another: they are all liars and dissemblers, pretending fair in words, but meaning quite otherways.

Ver. 3. *The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.*] This vice hath spread itself so universally among us, that it cannot be rooted up, but only by the hand of Heaven: which will destroy these pestilent deceivers; who speak also big and blasphemous words, whereby they daunt those that are below them.

Ver. 4. *Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*] We will have the better, say they, of all those that oppose us; and our tongues are the weapons whereby we will get the victory. They are our own; who shall hinder us from employing them to supplant whom we please? whether it be true or false which we say, what is that to any body; or who shall call us to an account for it?

Ver. 5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*] That will the Lord; whom the sighs, and tears, and miserable groans, of those poor wretches, who are oppressed by your calumnies, have moved to resolve to take a speedy vengeance on you. He hath absolutely determined to rescue and deliver them from your snares and fraudulent practices: you may puff and storm as much as you please, but shall not be able to hinder it.

Ver. 6. *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*] For the promises of God are not deceitful like yours; but sincere, and void of all guile: the purest silver, refined to the greatest perfection, is not more free from dross, than they are from all mixture of falsehood.

Ver. 7. *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*] I am confident, O Lord, thou wilt perform them, and not suffer thy words to fail. Thou wilt ever preserve him that confides in thee from this perverse generation, how oft soever they renew their attempts against him.

Ver. 8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*] Which will make the wicked not know which way to turn themselves; but be ready to burst with anger and vexation, when they see those poor men, whom they contemned and vilified, not only preserved, but exalted by thy favour to dignity and honour.

PSALM XIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle. It is not known to what time it relates; but by the matter of it we understand he was in some great distress when he indited it, either by the persecution of Saul, or of Absalom. Theo-

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doret thinks the latter, and gives this reason for it: that the trouble which Saul gave him was before his great sin, and so he was full of confidence; but that of Absalom was after it, which made him cry out in this doleful manner.

Ver. 1. *HOW long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*] What a sad condition is this, O Lord, into which I am fallen, and in which thou seemest to neglect me? I have waited a long time for some glimpse of thy favour; but can see no sign of deliverance, nor tell how long thou intendest to delay it.

Ver. 2. *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*] O how afflictive is it, that there is no end of my anxious thoughts! but I am always casting in my mind, with a heavy heart, where I shall shift for my life, and can think myself in no place secure. The power of my enemy is very great, and threatens, like a tempest hanging over my head, every moment to fall upon me. O when shall I see it dispersed?

Ver. 3. *Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.*] Thus I sigh perpetually to thee, O Lord, the omnipotent Ruler and just Judge of the world; beseeching thee to commiserate my affliction, and, as thou hast done often, to answer my prayer. Thou seest with what dangers I am encompassed, and how forlorn and dismal my condition is: endue me with wisdom and circumspection, that I may escape these dangers; and revive and cheer me under these sad afflictions, lest my spirit sink within me, or the enemy destroy me.

Ver. 4. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*] Let not him that persecutes me boast of his success, as he certainly will, unless thou affordest me thy conduct and comfort; which I humbly again implore, that they who join with him may not have the pleasure to see me fall, and insult over my misery.

Ver. 5. *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*] I am unworthy, indeed, of thy favour; but hope thou wilt magnify thine own mercy, in which I have placed such an entire confidence, that I persuade myself I shall have the joy to see thee deliver me out of all these distresses.

Ver. 6. *I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*] Which shall be acknowledged with the most cheerful hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, who hath dealt so well with me, as to render to me not according to my merits, but according to my hope and trust in his inconceivable mercy.

PSALM XIV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm (which was composed, as the foregoing, by David, and delivered by him to the master of music in the tabernacle) may probably refer, though it be not in the title expressed, to the universal apostacy of the people, in the rebellion of Absalom, from the allegiance they owed to him, and from the duty they owed to God.

Ver. 1. *THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good.*] Though the wicked are not yet so impudent, as openly to deny God with their mouths, yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts sure are, God takes no notice what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2. *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*] But let them know that he exactly observes them; and that all the ways of the sons of men are naked and bare before his eyes: though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

Ver. 3. *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*] The whole nation hath lost all sense of their duty; and, like a body without a spirit, is so rotten and putrefied, that it is hard to find so much as one that hath any sense of goodness in him.

Ver. 4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.*] Strange! that they should all be thus senseless; as not only to injure and oppress my poor innocent people, but to be cruel and void of all pity towards them, and to throw off likewise all religion.

Ver. 5. *There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.*] What a terror will it be to them to see the Divine vengeance seize on them, when they think themselves most secure? for he, who is the righteous judge, will not desert those who are faithful to him, but graciously deliver them.

Ver. 6. *You have shamed the counsel of the poor; because the Lord is his refuge.*] Your confusion, O ye atheistical fools, will be the greater; because you mocked and jeered at that poor despicable party of men, who resolved to adhere to piety and virtuous loyalty, and to wait patiently upon God, and trust in him alone for safety:

Ver. 7. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*] Who is mighty to save, whatsoever you think, and resides by a special token of his presence in Mount Zion. Oh that it might please him to send us deliverance from thence, and to restore us again to the happy enjoyment of that place, from whence we are banished! it would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings; and fill not only Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness. (2 Sam. xix. 9, &c.)

PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, in which he excites the people to the study of solid virtue, was composed by David, either when he brought the ark to Mount Zion, (2 Sam. vi.) or when he was restored thither again (as he desired in the conclusion of the foregoing Psalm), after the rebellion of Absalom, (2 Sam. xix.) Then it was very seasonable to ad-

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monish them to live better, as became those who were under the government of God (as Theodoret excellently speaks), and had received such a great deliverance from him.

Ver. 1. *LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*] Lord, what a happiness is it, that thou wilt be pleased to dwell among us in this mountain wherein thou hast pitched thy tabernacle! but who shall have the honour to be admitted into thy society, and enjoy all the privileges of a true worshipper of thee?

Ver. 2. *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*] I hear thee answer (methinks) as if a voice came from thy holy oracle, saying, Not all that are descended of Abraham, nor every one that offers me sacrifices, and observes my appointed rites; but he who completely endeavours to please me in all the parts of a holy life, exercising justice and mercy to his neighbour, as well as piety to me; and taking care he wrong not his neighbour in words no more than in deeds.

Ver. 3. *He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.*] He that doth not abuse his tongue to calumny and detraction, nor is any other way injurious to his neighbour; who neither reproaches his neighbour himself, nor lightly believes, increases, or spreads the reproaches which are begun by others.

Ver. 4. *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord: he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*] Who never courts men for their riches and power, if their wickedness makes them despicable; but honours those who are truly pious, though never so poor: and who hath such a respect to religion, that whatsoever he promises by oath he will perform, though he loses never so much by keeping his faith.

Ver. 5. *He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*] He who orders his private affairs so exactly, that he makes no gain of the money he lends to his poor brethren, (Exod. xxii. 25. Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.) and behaves himself so well, when he is in public office, that no gift can corrupt him to condemn the innocent, or absolve the guilty. He that lives after this manner, need never fear to fall from my favour.

PSALM XVI.

Michtam of David.

ARGUMENT.

A most excellent Psalm of David, more precious than any jewel, and worthy to be inscribed on a marble pillar, to endure to all posterity. For beside admirable expressions of his faith and confidence in God (though he was most violently persecuted by Saul, and forced to fly into foreign countries), it contains a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord Christ from the dead.

Ver. 1. *PRESERVE me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.*] Thou seest, O most mighty God, with what dangers I am encompassed: defend and protect me, I beseech thee, for I depend upon thee alone for safety.

Ver. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee.*] I ever did so, as my conscience testifies; and therefore I hope thou wilt still continue my gracious God. Not that I can merit any favour of thee, or, by any good that I can do, requite thy kindness to me:

Ver. 3. *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*] But if thou wilt be pleased to protect me, I will employ all my power (when I come to the throne) to protect the pious in the land: worthy men, who excel in virtue, shall be preferred and honoured; for they are the persons who are most dear to me, and in whose company alone I delight.

Ver. 4. *Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*] They multiply idols, (here in this place, whither I am driven, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) and are zealous in the service of another god: but I will never forsake thee, by partaking with them in their abominable sacrifices, in which the blood of men is offered, nor by swearing by the name of any of their false gods.

Ver. 5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*] The Lord of heaven and earth is the God whom I serve: he, who is the supreme dispenser of all things, hath given me a kingdom for my portion, where he himself is worshipped; and he will defend and maintain my title to it while I adhere to him:

Ver. 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*] As I am resolved to do: for there is no place so pleasant as that where he is worshipped; no country comparable to that (for all manner of good things) which he hath settled upon me, though I am not yet possessed of it.

Ver. 7. *I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night-season.*] I will therefore praise the Lord, and acknowledge his love; who hath hitherto guided me to behave myself so prudently, that my enemies have not been able to surprise me. In the darkest night of affliction, when I could not see my way, he hath secretly inspired my mind with wise thoughts, and admonished me what course to take for my preservation.

Ver. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*] This hath ever been my practice, to conceive God always present to me: and since he is still nigh to support and defend me, the fiercest assaults of my enemies shall never be able to deject me from that dignity which he hath designed for me.

Ver. 9. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*] In confidence of which I feel not only a perfect satisfaction, but joy and triumph of heart. My tongue cannot but boast of it; and, be my condition never so weak and low, I shall rest in hope to be raised up again.

Ver. 10. *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*] For thou wilt not suffer me to remain always in this forlorn condition, nor let him, whom thou hast anointed to be thy king, be destroyed by Saul: *much less let that great King perish (whom thou hast promised of my seed); but, though they kill him and lay him in his grave, thou wilt take him from thence, and raise him from the dead, before his body be in the least corrupted.*

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Ver. 11. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*] Thou wilt shew me the way to escape out of all these dangers *(and do much more for the Messiah, who, being raised from the dead, shall live eternally);* and not only preserve my life, but satiate me with joy, when thy favour hath settled me on the throne, by that almighty power which is able to dispense everlasting happiness; *and will certainly exalt the Messiah to reign at thy right hand in endless joy and pleasure, after all his grievous sufferings.*

PSALM XVII.

ARGUMENT.

A Prayer of David; wherein he humbly represents to God his innocence in those things whereof he was accused: (of affecting the kingdom, I suppose, and seeking the life of Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) and therefore beseeches him to grant him deliverance from his persecutors and calumniators (Saul, it is most likely, and those that set him on). See Theodoret.

Ver. 1. *HEAR the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.*] I am oppressed, O Lord, with such false accusations, that I have no way but to appeal to thee, who art the righteous judge of the world; beseeching thee to deal with me according to the justice of my cause. It is my most earnest request to thee; and I desire no favour of thee, if these lips have spoken any deceitful words against Saul, or do now dissemble with thy majesty.

Ver. 2. *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*] Who hast long suspended thy sentence, and let my enemies pursue me, as if I was guilty: but I humbly entreat thee at last openly to acquit me; and to shew that thou regardest the greatness of no man's person, but only his uprightness and integrity.

Ver. 3. *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*] Thou art privy to the inmost thoughts of my heart; in the greatest retirements thou seest what I design; and hast tried me also (as gold in the fire) by many afflictions, which thou didst never find to make me think of any unlawful courses for my preservation: but still I have been what I pretended, and my words and secret thoughts have always agreed together.

Ver. 4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of my lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*] I know what men are apt to do in such circumstances; but the respect I bear to thy commandments hath preserved me from those murderous practices, which the violent man would have boldly attempted. (1 Sam. xxvi. 8.)

Ver. 5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*] And I beseech thee still confirm me in this resolution; that no temptation may make me forsake that tract of virtue in which I have hitherto persisted;

Ver. 6. *I have called upon thee; for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.*] And in which I doubt not to be safe: for I have never yet cried unto thee but thou hast granted my request, and wilt not now, I hope, refuse to condescend unto it; but admit of this appeal which I make to thee, and do me right.

Ver. 7. *Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*] Thy mercy will appear most wonderful in my preservation from this imminent danger wherein I am. Magnify it, therefore, O thou whose property it is to interpose thy mighty power, for the deliverance of such as confide in nothing but thy omnipotent goodness, from those who rise up against them to destroy them.

Ver. 8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*] I commend myself to thy watchful providence; beseeching thee to defend me with the same care that we do that tender part in the midst of our eye. As a hen covers her chickens under her wings, from the ravenous bird that hovers over them to devour them:

Ver. 9. *From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies who compass me about.*] So do thou, O Lord, protect me (who fly unto thee for safety) from the wicked that are about to seize on me and spoil me; from those deadly enemies which have beset me round with eager desires and hopes to destroy me.

Ver. 10. *They are enclosed in their own fat; with their mouth they speak proudly.*] Who are so stuffed with worldly goods, and have thriven so long in their ungodly courses, that they are grown extreme proud of their power: and not only haughtily threaten my destruction, but presumptuously brag as if they had already accomplished their desire.

Ver. 11. *They have now compassed us in our steps; they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*] And, indeed, they have now gotten me and my followers into a very great strait: (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) and which way soever we turn ourselves, we are in danger to fall into the hands of those who have steadfastly resolved our utter ruin.

Ver. 12. *Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*] No lion can be more desirous to tear a lamb in pieces, than Saul is to make a prey of me. Like a young lion in his den, he watches when an opportunity will offer itself that he may fall upon me, (1 Sam. xxiii. 7, 8. xxiv. 2, &c.)

Ver. 13. *Arise, O Lord; disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.*] Delay no longer, therefore, O Lord, but speedily appear to defeat him. Throw him down to the ground, when he thinks to fall upon me: and though thou hast suffered the wicked to wound me sorely, yet let him not kill me, who depended upon thy power, which is able to deliver me.

Ver. 14. *From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.*] He hath many, I know, that join with him to destroy me; but they are only mortal men, O Lord, who can do nothing but what thou permittest them for my correction: worldly men, who look no farther than this present life; and desire no other satisfaction, but to be very rich, to have a numerous posterity, and to leave them great estates, when they can enjoy them no longer.

Ver. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*] Which prosperity I do in no wise envy them, but think

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myself happy that I can approach into thy presence, and, with a good conscience, wait for thy favour; nothing doubting, but when thou shalt shew thyself in thy majesty and power, it will be abundantly to my satisfaction.

PSALM XVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the Servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the Words of this Song, in the Day that the Lord delivered him from the Hand of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of Saul: and he said,

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David (whom the Lord chose to serve him in governing the children of Israel), and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle, for a perpetual commemoration of God's gracious care over him, and preservation of him, through the whole course of the long persecution and opposition he met withal, before he could get the kingdom. For which singular providence, he still gave particular thanks to God after every deliverance or victory which he vouchsafed him: but, at last (so great was his piety), he made one general acknowledgment of God's goodness to him, when he was peaceably settled upon his throne, in delivering him from the Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations, who rose up against him (and that in a miraculous manner, as he describes it, ver. 13, 14, &c. where Theodoret observes, that, in his time, God scattered the enemies of Christians by the like dreadful tempests); but especially from Saul, who (as he was the first, so) was the most violent, implacable, and dangerous, of all his enemies.

The sense of the Psalm is this:

Ver. 1. *I WILL love thee, O Lord, my strength.*] I love thee, O Lord, to whom I owe my safety and preferment, with the most passionate and ardent affection: and I will never cease to love thee thus, as long as ever I live.

Ver. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*] For it was not the caves and lurking-places, (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 5. xxiii. 23.) nor the fortresses and strong holds, (xxiii. 14. 19. 29.) the rocks and impregnable forts, (xxiv. 2.) the high mountains and steep hills, to which I fled, (xxvi. 1.) that preserved me from my enemies; but the Lord Almighty, whom I made my refuge, and whom I acknowledge for my deliverer: to his gracious providence, and powerful protection, I ascribe my safety, and will never confide in any other security; he defended me in the most dangerous assaults of my enemies; he repelled all their forces, and placed me out of the reach of their violence.

Ver. 3. *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies.*] Praised therefore be the Lord, unto whom I humbly commended myself by prayer (as I mean to do always) in my distresses, and he delivered me from all my enemies.

Ver. 4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*] When there appeared no way for my escape, but they thought that they had me as sure as a bird taken in a net; when whole troops of ungodly men came pouring in upon me as a torrent, that threatened to sweep me quite away;

Ver. 5. *The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.*] When I had no more power to help myself than a dead man bound hand and foot in his grave; (so suddenly was I entangled in their deadly snares, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.)

Ver. 6. *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*] This was my belief in such grievous straits: I made my usual addresses to the Lord, and with great earnestness supplicated my most merciful God, who had so often delivered me: and, though he be so infinitely above us in his heavenly palace, he did not despise my petition, but it was admitted into his presence, and found a gracious audience.

Ver. 7. *Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*] For he instantly appeared in a sensible manner to confound my enemies; who saw his wrathful displeasure in the dreadful tempest which fell upon them, and made the very earth tremble under them.

Ver. 8. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.*] There was nothing to be seen but fuming smoke and devouring fire; which, at his command, shot out burning coals among them.

Ver. 9. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.*] His glorious majesty also visibly shewed itself, bowing the heavens (the place of its residence), and coming down in a thick cloud, which was spread as a carpet under it.

Ver. 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*] Some of the principal angels were its chariot, wherein it rode very swiftly; and a rapid wind was the token of their presence, (2 Sam. v. 24.)

Ver. 11. *He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.*] A great darkness obscured it; for round about it were the rest of the heavenly ministers disposed to attend upon it in watery vapours and thick clouds of the sky.

Ver. 12. *At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed; hail-stones and coals of fire.*] Who, going forth from his glorious presence, sent hail-stones and coals of fire (as in the days of Joshua, x. 11.) in the face of my enemies.

Ver. 13. *The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail-stones and coals of fire.*] Which were followed with such terrible thunder, (like that in the days of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 10.) mixed with more hail-stones and fiery exhalations, as declared the greatness of his majesty, and the mightiness of his power.

Ver. 14. *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*] These were the arrows wherewith he scattered them: there needed no other darts to discomfit them.

Ver. 15. *Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*] For even the earth itself was rent and torn by them; they cleft it asunder, and penetrated so deep, that the secret abysses

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of it were discovered through the breaches that were made; when thou, O Lord, in great indignation didst rebuke my enemies.

Ver. 16. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.*] Nothing but such a power from above could have preserved me, which the Lord was pleased graciously to extend to me: he laid hold on me, and kept me from sinking; he snatched me out of many and great dangers, which, like a deluge, were ready to overwhelm me.

Ver. 17. *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*] He delivered me first from that mighty giant Goliath, and then from Saul, whose power I was not able to withstand; and afterward from the Philistines and Syrians, and many other nations, whose forces were far superior unto mine, and whose hatred instigated them to do all they could to destroy me.

Ver. 18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay.*] When I was weak and unable to resist, they suddenly invaded me; but the Lord would not suffer them to overthrow me: (1 Sam. xxiii. xxiv. &c.)

Ver. 19. *He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*] But brought me out of those straits into a state of perfect liberty. He delivered me (when they thought they had pent me up so close that I could not escape them) because he had a kindness for me.

Ver. 20. *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*] He knew also that I was unjustly persecuted; and therefore rewarded me according to the integrity of my heart, and the purity of my actions; which were never guilty of that whereof they accused me.

Ver. 21. *For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*] For I never took any unlawful courses for my deliverance; but when Saul fell into my hands, I would not kill him, because he was the Lord's anointed, (1 Sam. xxiv. 10.)

Ver. 22. *For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.*] For I laid his precepts before me, as the rule of my actions; and did not bid them stand aside, when it seemed to be my interest not to observe them:

Ver. 23. *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*] But chose rather to suffer any thing than lose my integrity: and how unjustly soever my enemies dealt with me, I would not imitate them; but, though I could not hinder *theirs*, kept myself from *mine* iniquity.

Ver. 24. *Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight.*] And therefore hath the Lord, who administers all things with the exactest justice, and the greatest goodness, heard my prayer: (1 Sam. xxvi. 23.) and dealt with me according to my innocent intentions, which would not let me defile my hands with the blood of Saul, when it was in my power to be revenged of him.

Ver. 25. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.*] Such is the gracious method of thy providence, O Lord, who wilt do good to those who do good to others, and do them justice also (against their oppressors and calumniators) who preserve their integrity.

Ver. 26. *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.*] And keep thy promises faithfully with those whose piety is unfeigned, and who immoveably keep their fidelity to thee. But if any will take crooked ways to obtain their ends, thou wilt ensnare them in their own devices; and, by such means as they least think of, lead them to destruction.

Ver. 27. *For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.*] For thou art wont to deliver those who are poor and miserable, when they humbly wait on thee; and to lay those low, who (proud of their power) insolently oppress them.

Ver. 28. *For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.*] I myself am an instance of it, who owe all my prosperity and joy to thee; by whom (when my hopes were ready to expire, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) I was brought out of a calamitous estate into this splendour and royal greatness which now I enjoy.

Ver. 29. *For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*] For the strongest and most numerous enemies were not able to stand before me: I easily scaled the highest walls, wherein they thought themselves most securely defended against me, (2 Sam. v. 7, &c.)

Ver. 30. *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*] God is not like to men, for he never deserts his servants (as men are wont to do those that depend upon them) in difficult and dangerous affairs: his promises are freer from deceit, than the most refined gold from dross; and none shall be able to hurt those that rely upon them.

Ver. 31. *For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?*] For who is there that can frustrate his intentions, or resist his will? What power is there above or equal to his whom we worship, that can injure those whom he will protect, or defend those whom he will destroy?

Ver. 32. *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*] It was this mighty Lord that inspired me with courage, and removed all obstacles out of my way, to the completing my conquests, (2 Sam. v. 10.)

Ver. 33. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*] If swiftness was necessary, he made me as nimble as a hind, to pursue mine enemies even into those places, which, for their height and cragginess, were thought inaccessible.

Ver. 34. *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*] If there was need of dexterity or strength, he bestowed it on me to such a degree, that I was able to wrest the strongest bow out of my enemy's hand, and break it in pieces.

Ver. 35. *Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation; and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.*] If at any time I fell into the thickest troops of them, I was safely protected by thee and delivered. Thy mighty power upheld me from being oppressed by their numbers; and by thy goodness, with a handful of men, I got great victories.

Ver. 36. *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*] Thou didst open a wide passage to me in

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my greatest straits, and in the most uneven and difficult ways I never stumbled:

Ver. 37. *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.*] But having routed my enemies, I pursued them so closely, that I overtook them in their flight, and did not return to my camp till I had destroyed them.

Ver. 38. *I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*] I gave them such a blow, that they were not able to renew the fight; but were so perfectly subdued, that they lay at my feet.

Ver. 39. *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.*] Which is all to be ascribed to thy mighty power, O God; who gavest me both the courage to fight, and success in the encounter, with such numerous enemies as hoped to destroy me.

Ver. 40. *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.*] To thy praise I again mention it (not to magnify my own prowess), that they who hated me submitted their very necks to me, that I might kill them, or impose what yoke I pleased on them.

Ver. 41. *They cried, but there was none to save them; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.*] They sought for help of their allies and confederates; but it was beyond their power to deliver them: for they were deserted by the Lord, who regarded not their cries unto him;

Ver. 42. *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind; I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*] But left them to be beaten and dispersed by me, till they were as weak as the small dust, which is tossed up and down with every wind; and as contemptible as the dirt in the street, which every body tramples under foot.

Ver. 43. *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.*] Thus hast thou continued thy kindness to me, till thou seatedst me on the throne, both of Israel and Judah; whose contentions are ceased, and both united in me. (2 Sam. v. 1.) And, since that time, thou hast not only delivered me from those dangerous rebellions, (2 Sam. xviii.) and seditious motions, (2 Sam. xx.) which have been raised among my own people to dethrone me; but made foreign nations subject to me, and people whom I had no knowledge of to become my tributaries.

Ver. 44. *As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.*] The very report of me and of my victories made some of them heartily submit themselves to me; and others dissemble their hostility, and offer me their service.

Ver. 45. *The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.*] They trembled and fell, like withered leaves, at the sound of my name; and, distrusting their strong holds, came creeping out with fear, to surrender them into my hands.

Ver. 46. *The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.*] Blessed be the Lord (to whose eternal glory and honour I speak all this): let him be everlastingly praised, who hath preserved me in so many dangers: let him, who not only preserved but exalted me, be magnified and exalted with the highest praises.

Ver. 47. *It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.*] For he is that mighty God (I can never say it often enough), who hath many and many a time executed vengeance for me on those who were injurious to me; and hath brought many nations under my empire.

Ver. 48. *He delivereth me from mine enemies; yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me; thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*] It is he to whom I owe my life (which my enemies, if he had not rescued me, would have taken from me): and, which is more, thou hast made me superior to them all, and set me on a throne, in spite of the fierce and violent persecution of Saul; from which thou didst mercifully deliver me.

Ver. 49. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*] And therefore I will every where make my thankful acknowledgments unto thee, O Lord: those strange nations shall know that I ascribe my victories unto thee; in honour of whose great name I will sing this perpetual song.

Ver. 50. *Great deliverance giveth he to his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*] The Lord hath granted wonderful and manifold deliverances to me; who reign not by usurpation, but by his special appointment; and the same mercy, by which alone I was advanced to this dignity, shall be continued to me, and to my posterity, till the coming of that great King, whose kingdom shall have no end.

PSALM XIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David (and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle), declaring that no man could be ignorant of God who would consider his admirable works; much less could the Jews, whom he had instructed by his law; and therefore justly expected their greater care not wilfully to offend him.

Ver. 1. *THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.*] There is no part of this great fabric of the world which doth not direct us to a most mighty Being, by whom it was made: but above all the rest, the heavens, which are so vastly extended, and wherein we see so many glorious bodies, proclaim aloud to all mankind the immense greatness, and power, and wisdom, and goodness of God; which shine most brightly there.

Ver. 2. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*] By their settled and orderly revolution the day and the night are made; from whose constant succession, and commodious variations, there issues forth (as water from a fountain) perpetual instruction, and matter of praise and thanks to his most wise goodness.

Ver. 3. *There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*] They cannot speak, indeed, as we can do; nor do we hear any words they utter: and yet, without these, they are understood by all nations; even by the most barbarous, who understand not a word of any other language.

Ver. 4. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.*] They all read here, as in a book, the wonderful art and skill of that almighty Being, who framed this regular structure; though they be never so re-

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mote, they hear them preach (as the apostles hereafter shall preach more fully) how great and how good he is: especially if they hearken to that universal minister of his, the sun, which hath its habitation fixed for it here;

Ver. 5. *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*] And comes forth every morning decked with such a radiant light, that no bridegroom looks so cheerfully, or is so adorned, on his marriage-day. Its swiftness also is as admirable as its beauty, for the mightiest champion can but weakly imitate it, in the speediness, evenness, and unweariedness of its course.

Ver. 6. *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*] It runs from the east to the west every day; and, in its yearly revolution, visits the southern and northern parts: so that all the earth feels the benefit of its quickening heat.

Ver. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*] Thus is God visible to all the world in the face of the heavens; but to us he is conspicuous in a more excellent manner, by the revelation he hath made of himself in the law of Moses: which is a more perfect light to guide us, than the sun itself; restoring and comforting the most drooping souls, more than the sun cheers our bodily spirits. For it is a sure testimony of God's will and of his love, and preserves ignorant souls from being seduced to worship the sun as a god: for it makes them, at the first word, so wise, as to understand that "the Lord created the heavens, as well as the earth."

Ver. 8. *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*] And from thence delivered to us a complete rule of life for all sorts of men among us: who see with great joy all officers and rulers, both sacred and civil, directed how to manage all for the public good; and every private man taught to keep himself pure from all manner of wickedness: it being as clear as the sun what he ought to do, and what to avoid.

Ver. 9. *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.*] The true worship of God is here unalterably settled, (Deut. xii. 32.) free from all profane mixtures of superstition: and all our transactions with men are prescribed to be in perfect truth and righteousness.

Ver. 10. *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.*] We are happier in this than in all the gold and precious treasures which are brought from other countries; or in the most delicious pleasures which he hath provided for us in our own.

Ver. 11. *Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*] I say nothing but what I have tried: for, by following the admonitions of thy holy laws, both in my private and my public capacity, thy servant is become thus illustrious: and in their observance there is not only much satisfaction at present, but a far greater reward in the conclusion.

Ver. 12. *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*] All our unhappiness is, that we do not observe them so strictly as we ought. They are a perfect rule; but our obedience, alas! is so exceedingly imperfect, that we cannot so much as number our wanderings from it: many of which we never observed; and therefore are so far from meriting any reward for obedience, that I must humbly beg thy pardon for the demerits of my negligence:

Ver. 13. *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*] And the assistance of thy grace likewise (without which I shall still farther swerve from thy law), to preserve me from all wilful sins against thee. I am devoted to thy service, O Lord; therefore I beseech thee so to strengthen my will to please thee, that no temptation may prevail with me to consent deliberately to offend thee. Then shall I (notwithstanding my infirmities and ignorances) be accounted upright before thee; and be free from a great deal of guilt, which otherways, by manifold transgressions, I shall draw upon me.

Ver. 14. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.*] And I shall have the confidence also then to address myself unto thee, both openly and in secret, with hopes that all my sacrifices (offered from a heart that sincerely studies to be obedient to thee) shall be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord; to whom I fly for safety and deliverance, in all the assaults which the enemies, either of my body or my soul, make upon me.

PSALM XX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David (and by him delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle), wherein the people are taught to pray for his good success in some great expedition: it is probable (from ver. 7.) against the Ammonites and Syrians, who came, with great numbers of horsemen and chariots, to fight with him, (2 Sam. x. 6. 8. 1 Chron. xix. 7.)

Ver. 1. *THE Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*] The Lord, who never fails those that seek him, hear thy prayer, when the enemy distresseth thee in the day of battle: (2 Sam. x. 9, &c.) the mighty God, who hath made a gracious covenant with Jacob and his posterity, protect thee, and make thee victorious.

Ver. 2. *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.*] O God, who hast pitched thy tabernacle among us, and dwellest in Mount Zion by a visible token of thy presence, succour our sovereign in the time of need, and support him in all assaults of such numerous enemies as are combined against him.

Ver. 3. *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt-sacrifice. Selah.*] Shew, by some signal token from heaven, that thou art pleased with all his oblations and burnt-sacrifices, whereby he made his supplication to thee, for thy blessing on him in this undertaking.

Ver. 4. *Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*] Make him as prosperous as he himself wishes; and enable him to accomplish whatsoever he designs.

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Ver. 5. *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.*] In confidence of thy help we will shout when we set upon our enemies; in thy power and might we will advance courageously against them: for the Lord will not fail to grant the petitions of our sovereign; whose cause is so just, and who hath been so insolently treated by them, (2 Sam. x. 3, 4.)

Ver. 6. *Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed: he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.*] This is the assured hope of every soul of us; we are as certain as if he had already obtained it, that the Lord will make him victorious: for he reigns by his special appointment: who, as he infinitely excels in strength, and commands all the hosts of heaven; so will declare the exceeding greatness of his power, in giving him an illustrious deliverance.

Ver. 7. *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*] We are not daunted at the vast numbers of our confederate enemies; some of which boast of their chariots, others of their horses: but to all these we oppose the mighty power of the Lord, who hath heretofore done such great things for us.

Ver. 8. *They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright.*] And we triumph beforehand, saying, they are thrown down from their chariots, and fallen from their horses, wherein they trusted: but we, whom they despised, are erect and stand unmoveable, merely by our confidence in the Lord.

Ver. 9. *Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call.*] Let it be unto us, O Lord, according to our desires and our hopes: preserve our king; and, in the day when we cry unto thee for help, make our armies victorious.

PSALM XXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

Theodoret truly observes, that, in this Psalm as well as the former, David (who was the author of it, and delivered it to the master of the music in the tabernacle) speaks in the person of the people: whom he instructs how to give God thanks (not for Hezekiah's recovery from his great sickness, and the lengthening of his days, as Theodoret takes it, but) for granting him those victories which they prayed for in the Psalm foregoing. And it is generally looked upon as describing, under that figure, the exaltation, glory, and majesty of Christ, which he obtained by his bloody death and passion. Many of the Hebrews themselves apply it to the Messiah. So that it may be called a Psalm of triumph, after the victories which David got over his enemies; which were a type of Christ's victory over death, and of the triumph that ensued. And truly there are some things in it which are more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David, as ver. 4—6.

Ver. 1. *THE king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*] Thou hast heard the prayers of thy people, O Lord, when they cried unto thee, saying, *Lord, save the king:* (xx. 9.) who will never cease, therefore, to thank thee, with the greatest joy and gladness, for that extraordinary strength and courage wherewith thou didst endue him. O how much beyond all expression are his joy and thankfulness for thy wonderful deliverance of him!

Ver. 2. *Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.*] Thou hast granted all that his heart desired, (xx. 4.) as well as that which he openly requested with his lips.

Ver. 3. *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*] Yea, more than his heart desired. For when he thought of no such thing, thou wast graciously pleased to anoint him to a kingdom: in which having settled him, thou hast added a new glory to him, and set an illustrious crown upon his head. (1 Chron. xx. 2.)

Ver. 4. *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*] He desired only to escape with his life, when he was encompassed with inevitable dangers: and thou moreover didst promise to prolong his days; (2 Sam. vii. 12.) and to continue the crown to his posterity for many generations, (2 Sam. vii. 16. 19.) as thou wilt do to his son Christ for ever and ever.

Ver. 5. *His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*] Great is the fame, also, which he hath won by the many victories thou hast given him: (2 Sam. vii. 9.) all nations honour him (as they shall much more do the Messiah), and reverence that royal majesty to which thou hast exalted him. (1 Chron. xiv. 2. 17.)

Ver. 6. *For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*] And, which is a far greater glory, thou hast not only bestowed extraordinary benefits upon himself; but made him a blessing to future generations, whom thou wilt bless for his sake. (1 Kings viii. 15. 20. 56.) By which special favour and token of thy love to him, thou hast raised him to the highest pitch of joy as well as of greatness.

Ver. 7. *For the king trusteth in the Lord; and through the mercy of the Most High, he shall not be moved.*] Which shall never cease to cheer and refresh his spirit, because he confides in him who never fails to perform his promises: through his kindness, who is superior to all, the throne of David shall stand fast, though all the power on earth shall combine to overturn it.

Ver. 8. *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.*] They are thy enemies, O Most High, as well as his, who endeavour to disturb him; and they shall never escape thy vengeance: wheresoever they skulk or fly for safety, thy vengeance shall pursue them, and punish their spiteful opposition to thee.

Ver. 9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*] Woe be to them, when the time comes wherein thou wilt call them to an account for their hatred to thee. They shall as certainly perish, as if they were cast into a fiery oven: the Lord, who is justly incensed against them, shall utterly consume them with a sharp and unavoidable destruction.

Ver. 10. *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*] They shall be so far from finding any favour, that thou shalt quite ex-

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tinguish their families, and wholly abolish such a wicked generation.

Ver. 11. *For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.*] Who intended to destroy thy anointed, and root out thy religion. Their design was so mischievous, and therefore they deserve to be thus punished; though they were not able to effect it.

Ver. 12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.*] It may most justly provoke thee to set thyself against them: and, as their aim, and the bent of their heart, was to throw him down whom thou hast advanced; so to make them the mark of thy severest displeasure, till they fall down wounded and rise no more.

Ver. 13. *Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.*] Whereby all good men shall be excited to extol thy power; and therefore shew the greatness of it, O Lord, and magnify thyself before their eyes: and then, whatsoever others do, we, who are delivered by thee, will set forth thy mightiness in our songs, and celebrate it with perpetual praises.

PSALM XXII.

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar (Hind of the Morning). A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David (and directed to the master of music in the tabernacle), wherein, under his own person, (who was persecuted as a hind is by the hunters early in the morning, ver. 16.) he makes a large description of the sufferings of Christ; and, in conclusion, of his exaltation, and the propagation of his kingdom to the utmost ends of the earth. Some of which things are delivered in such expressions, that they are more literally fulfilled in our Saviour, than ever they were in David; to whom they belong, but in a metaphorical sense. I shall note the particulars in their proper places, underneath the paraphrase, which I would not too much enlarge, or interrupt, by inserting them here.

Ver. 1. *MY God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*] O my God, my most gracious God, whose power no creature can resist, how strange doth it seem, that I, who have been thy care so long, am now left without any visible means of escaping those that seek my life; and that the loudest cries which I pour out of a heart loaden with sorrow and grief, are far from prevailing for any relief, (Matt. xxvii. 46.)

Ver. 2. *O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent.*] O my God (for so I will still call thee, even in the greatest distresses), there is no day, no night, passes, wherein I do not, with incessant cries, most importunately call upon thee; but can obtain no rest from my persecutions.

Ver. 3. *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*] Yet thou art he that hatest all those who unjustly persecute thy servant; and keepest thy word most faithfully with them that depend upon thee: as appears by the many deliverances thou hast sent them from thy holy place, where they celebrate thy name with their perpetual praises.

Ver. 4. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*] They that are gone before us have left us many remembrances of thy mercy to those that piously relied on thee: in all their straits they applied themselves unto thee as their only deliverer; and by thy help they escaped the greatest dangers.

Ver. 5. *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*] Their fervent prayers prevailed with thee (though mine can now obtain no audience): they were confident thou wouldest preserve them in safety, and their hope did not make them ashamed.

Ver. 6. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*] Whereas I, who have waited on thee also after their example, am so disappointed in my expectation, that my adversaries are ready to tread me under their feet: so weak I am, and thereby so contemptible, that not only the great men, but the baser sort and dregs of the people, publicly reproach and despise me.

Ver. 7. *And all they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying.*] All that see the straits to which I am reduced openly deride me: they make mouths at me, and, in a scornful manner, shake their heads, and jest upon me, saying,

[*This was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Saviour Christ,* Matt. xxvii. 39. 43.]

Ver. 8. *He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*] This is he that talked so much of the favour of God to him, and depended upon him that he would deliver him: let us see now what he will do for him: let him deliver him out of our hands, and shew thereby that he is so dear, as he pretends, unto him.

Ver. 9. *But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.*] This insolent language is very grievous to my soul, but it shall not cast me into utter despair of thy mercy: I will rather continue to wait upon thee, who, without my knowledge, and when I could not call upon thee, didst grant me a greater deliverance than this which I now ask of thee: for thou broughtest me out of my mother's womb, and then providedst nourishment for me; tookest a singular care of me while I hung upon her breasts.

Ver. 10. *I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.*] In my infancy thou didst preserve me from all the mischiefs to which that weak estate is incident; and ever since hast been my most gracious protector: for, from my first coming into the world till this moment, I have had nothing to trust unto but only thy good providence; which all along declared (though I was the youngest of my brethren) what a large share I had in thy loving-kindness.

Ver. 11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*] And shall I think thou wilt now forsake me, when I call upon thee, and acknowledge thy former care, and hope for thy future? Go on, O God, to conclude as thou hast begun, and continue to do me good. And now that there is an appearance of the sorest distress, and I am no more able to help myself than when I was an infant, and have less help and succour from others; be

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thou pleased to exert thy power, as thou hast ever done, for my deliverance.

Ver. 12. *Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*] It must be thy work alone; for my enemies are not only very numerous, but so mighty and formidable in their power, so insolent also and furious, and have enclosed and hemmed me in so strictly, that it is impossible without thy miraculous providence to escape them.

Ver. 13. *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*] A hungry lion is not more fierce nor more dreadful, when he is just ready to seize on his trembling prey, than these my persecutors; whom I hear roaring and thundering out their threats, and see coming with open mouth to fall upon me, greedily desiring and aiming to devour me:

Ver. 14. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*] Which have struck me with such consternation, that I am as weak as water; my bones are so loosed, that they are not able to support my body; my heart fails me, and my spirit dissolves and faints away, as wax melts before the fire.

Ver. 15. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*] Fear, sadness, and sorrow, have quite dried up my vital moisture: I have scarce strength enough left to complain: but am just upon the point to expire, and to be laid in my grave.

Ver. 16. *For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*] For that malicious company which have combined together to persecute me, are as greedy and as cruel as the hungry dogs, who have hunted down a hind (see the title), and are all gathered about her to tear her in pieces: they use me most shamefully, as well as cruelly, and have bored through my hands and my feet.

[*There is nothing like this in the history of David; of whom it can be only spoken poetically by an hyperbole.*]

Ver. 17. *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*] Grief and sorrow have so consumed my flesh, that my bones stick out through my skin, and may be distinctly numbered: and they that behold my misery are so far from having compassion on me, that they feed their eyes, and are exceedingly satisfied with this lamentable sight.

Ver. 18. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*] They make themselves sure I shall never recover; no more than the poor hind, whose skin the hunters have divided, or cast lots to whose share it shall fall. For so have they parted my upper garments among them, and cast lots who shall have my inner.

[*This also was more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David; in whose story we find nothing like it: and therefore it can signify nothing more (if applied to him) than that they looked upon him as utterly undone; and rifled his house, and despoiled him of all when he fled from Saul,* 1 Sam. xix.]

Ver. 19. *But be not thou far from me, O Lord; O my strength, haste thee to help me.*] Once more, therefore, I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to interpose, by thy power, in this grievous strait, for my deliverance: it is easy for thee to effect it, who art almighty, and I depend merely on thy aid; which I entreat thee to send speedily for my relief, or else it will come too late.

Ver. 20. *Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.*] Rescue my life from the sword, which the enemy hath drawn to despatch me: it is all I have left, and it is left without all defence but thine; who, I hope, wilt preserve it from the power of him, that, with the rage and fury of a dog, maliciously persecutes me.

Ver. 21. *Save me from the lion's mouth; for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*] Thou hast done as great things heretofore, and sent me relief when the fiercest and strongest enemies were pushing at me, and insulting over me: which makes me presume of thy favour now in this sore exigence, when the most violent men are ready to fall upon me, and tear me in pieces, if thou dost not save me.

Ver. 22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*] Save me, O Lord, and it will redound to thy praise, and not merely to my own satisfaction: for I will tell all my brethren how good and gracious thou art; and publicly proclaim the greatness of thy power, and wisdom, and justice (as well as of thy love), in the midst of thy faithful people.

[*This David did in the eighteenth Psalm; and this our Saviour did by his apostles,* Heb. ii. 12. *who preached his resurrection,* &c. *every where, to the praise and glory of God's grace.* Ephes. i. 6.]

Ver. 23. *Ye that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.*] I will call upon all the devout worshippers of the Lord to join with me in praising and giving thanks unto him. (1 Chron. xvi.) Let the whole posterity of Jacob (and whosoever hath any thing of his spirit in him) set forth the glory of his most excellent perfections, which shine in his marvellous works: let them all, I say, whom he hath chosen to be his peculiar people, most humbly worship and adore his majesty, and learn to give him faithful obedience.

[*All that follows is as applicable to Christ as to David; and some passages more fulfilled in him.*]

Ver. 24. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*] For that poor despicable person (whom men contemned and scorned, ver. 6, 7.) he hath not disdained to look graciously upon, in his lowest and vilest condition. But, though he seemed to neglect him for a time, hath seasonably appeared in his favour, and granted the earnest prayers which he put up unto him in his distress.

Ver. 25. *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*] Which shall be openly acknowledged, when I return to thy house with the heartiest praises to thee; from whom, I am sensible, I receive all the blessings I enjoy. And as I have been forward in my trouble to vow thee many sacrifices, if thou wouldest restore me; so I will certainly offer them in the presence of those that devoutly worship the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever.*] I will invite also those poor people, who were partakers with me in my sufferings, to come and feast with me on that plentiful provision I will make for them; and thereby encourage all those that seek the Lord sincerely, and depend upon

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him, to hope that they shall also praise him. Let me assure all such faithful souls, your hearts shall be always full of comfort and joy, which nothing shall be able to take away from you.

Ver. 27. *All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*] Nor shall the fame of thy wonderful works, O Lord, be confined within the narrow bounds of this one country; but spread itself to the farthermost parts of the earth; where they shall, with thankful commemorations of thy goodness, universally prostrate themselves before thee, and become thy subjects.

Ver. 28. *For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations.*] For the Lord is the sovereign of the whole world: and therefore, as all nations are under his dominion, so they shall all submit unto his government.

Ver. 29. *All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him; and none can keep alive his own soul.*] All they that are rich and powerful shall partake of his altar, and humbly worship him that bestows such benefits upon them:* and so shall all the poor and miserable also think themselves happy in his service. For he is the protector of them all; and the greatest, as well as the meanest, must acknowledge, that of him alone cometh their salvation.

[* *As they that ate of the sacrifices did,* 1 Cor. x. 18.]

Ver. 30. *A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*] Their posterity likewise shall devote themselves unto him, and propagate his religion unto future generations; whom the Lord shall adopt into his family.

Ver. 31. *They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*] They shall join themselves to the society of his people; and publish to those that shall succeed them the loving-kindness and the faithfulness of the Lord, in this wonderful deliverance, which he alone hath wrought for me.

PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seems to have been composed by David, after God had brought him out of that great distress, of which he complained in the foregoing, and settled him in a prosperous condition: wherein he was confident God would continue him.

Ver. 1. *THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*] There is no shepherd exercises a more tender and constant care over his flock than the Lord doth over me: and therefore I am confident I shall not want any thing that is necessary, either for my sustenance or for my defence, against those who would bereave me of my happiness.

Ver. 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*] For, as a good shepherd leads his sheep in the violent heat to shady places, where they may lie down and feed (not in parched, but) in fresh and green pastures; and in the evening leads them (not to muddy and troubled waters, but) to pure and quiet streams: so hath he already made a fair and plentiful provision for me; which I enjoy in peace without any disturbance.

Ver. 3. *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*] And lest I should lose so great a happiness, his goodness is pleased (for to nothing else can I ascribe it) both to direct and guide me in the right course of pious living, and to reduce me when I go astray; just as a shepherd brings back his wandering sheep from those craggy, untrodden paths, wherein they would lose themselves; and leads them into plain and easy ways, wherein they find rest and safety.

Ver. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*] Which makes me resolve to take a good courage, though I should fall again into the most dismal dangers (as a poor sheep sometimes doth into a deep pit): it shall not terrify me, when I remember that thou art present with me, to protect and defend me: thy royal power and pastoral care shall be my support and comfort.

Ver. 5. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*] But (such is thy extraordinary kindness to me) thou hast not merely provided food, but a feast for me; a most sumptuous feast, which, with great care and order, thou hast set before me, to the astonishment of my enemies: who with shame and grief behold me, whom they lately despised, rejoicing in thy royal bounty towards me, which entertains me even with superfluity of all good things.

Ver. 6. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*] And therefore I am bold to hope, that the same bounteous goodness and tender mercy which hath without my desert done all this for me, and pursues me as zealously with its favour as my enemies do with their malice, will still most graciously attend me to the end of my days, and settle me in a quiet enjoyment of his house (as well as my own); where I will never cease to praise his wonderful love towards me, and to give him thanks for all the benefits he hath bestowed upon his unworthy servant.

PSALM XXIV.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

As the foregoing Psalm seems to have been made by David presently after his settlement in his kingdom, so this, it is most likely, was penned by him, when he brought the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, and settled it (after many flittings and removals) in Mount Zion. Which place, upon that account, he prefers before all the rest of the world; and excites the people, who attended the ark thither with extraordinary pomp and solemnity, not to content themselves merely with that sort of piety, but to add the practice of all moral virtue; that so they might enjoy the blessings which might be expected from the Divine presence with them, and comfortably wait for the coming of the Messiah. Whose ascension to heaven is represented by the carrying of the ark up into Mount Zion; which was a type of heaven, as the ark was of the Lord Christ.

The Hebrews (from whom some copies of the LXX. add in the title, τῆς μιᾶς τῶν σαββάτων) were wont to sing this

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Psalm on the first day of the week; (see the Argument of Psalm xciii.) because, as some fancy, there is mention in the beginning of it of the creation of the earth; which Moses says was on that day: but rather, I should think, because therein their prophets and wise men saw a prophecy of Christ; whose first step to the throne of his glory was upon the first day of the week, when we constantly commemorate his resurrection. And there is so remarkable a difference between the eighth verse and the tenth, that we may justly think some new thing is intended in the ninth and tenth verses, which are a repetition of the seventh and eighth; *viz.* the ascension of our Lord Christ: for, in the beginning of the verse, the question is put with great emphasis, *Who is this King of glory?* and in the latter end, the words, *mighty in battle,* are omitted: because, in the days of Christ, as Aben Ezra himself gives the account, "Men are to turn their swords into plough-shares," &c.

Ver. 1. *THE earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*] What a favour is this, that the Divine Majesty will vouchsafe to take up his special residence here among us! when the whole earth is his, and all the creatures wherewith it is filled, this great world, and all the people that inhabit it.

Ver. 2. *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*] For by his almighty power it was formed, and therefore he hath a just propriety in it. He hath settled it also so firmly, that, though the seas and the rivers beat against it, they cannot overwhelm it; but, together with it, make a convenient dwelling for those that live in every part of it.

Ver. 3. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?*] And, blessed be God, we dwell in that part of the earth where he himself hath fixed his royal palace. (For this is the mountain that he hath chosen and separated from all other, to be the place of his special presence.) But who is worthy to appear before him? Who may hope to be admitted to a gracious audience with him?

Ver. 4. *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*] Not every one that lives in this happy country (though chosen to be his peculiar people), but he that carefully keeps his commands in thought, and deed, and word. He, I say, who not only preserves his hands pure from murder and theft, and such-like injurious actions, but his heart also from so much as designing them; who uses no lies, much less false oaths, to deceive his neighbour, and enrich himself; but religiously observes all his promises, especially those that are made in God's presence, though it be to his own detriment.

Ver. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*] This is the worshipper, and he alone, who shall receive a blessing, not only from the priest (when he comes out of the sanctuary), but from the Lord himself; who will faithfully keep his promises with them, and amply reward them, who are thus faithful to him.

Ver. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.*] This is the genuine people of God, whose prayers are like to prevail with him. Such should all those proselytes be, who seek the favour of being received into your communion, O ye children of Jacob.

Ver. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*] And let all those who thus follow the Lord (not merely with their bodies, but with their hearts), in this solemn entrance he now makes into the holy place, join with me, and say, Be ye open, O ye gates of the sanctuary; stand wide open, ye durable doors; and the King of incomparable majesty will enter, and, by the special token of his presence, dwell among us.

Ver. 8. *Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*] And if any ask, who this King is, whose majesty we proclaim to be so transcendent, let them know it is the Lord, who made and governs the world: that most mighty and invincible Lord, by whose presence with me I have been victorious in so many battles.

Ver. 9. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*] Therefore make no delay, O ye gates of the [*heavenly*] sanctuary; be ye open, wide open, O ye doors, which never shall decay; and the King of incomparable majesty, as I said, shall enter, and fix his seat in this holy place.

Ver. 10. *Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*] And if you ask again (as there is reason), with greater admiration, Who is this (see the Argument), the King of incomparable majesty? know that the Lord of the sun, moon, and stars, yea, of all the angelical powers; he is the King, whose transcendent majesty is come to make his residence here.

PSALM XXV.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seems to have been penned by David after the commission of some great sin, (ver. 11.) and in some great distress, whereinto he was fallen, (ver. 15, 16.) probably after the matter of Uriah, and when Absalom rebelled against him. Which brought to mind all the offences of his youth, (ver. 7.) and made him an earnest supplicant for the pardon of them, and for deliverance from his enemies. He began to make this petition with an extraordinary art; but the method is presently disturbed, by the ardency of his desires, and his passionate sorrow, which would not let him follow exactly the order of the letters of the alphabet, in the beginning of every verse, as he first designed.

Ver. 1. *UNTO thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*] O Lord, my constant and only refuge in all my troubles, I look up unto thee in this distress; most humbly waiting on thee, and hoping in thee that thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 2. *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.*] Thou knowest, O my God, that I place no confidence in any thing but thine almighty goodness, upon which I profess entirely to depend: and therefore do not fail to relieve me, lest I hang down my head in confusion of face, and my enemies insult over me, when they see me disappointed of the help which I have so often declared I expect from thee.

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Ver. 3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*] Yea, for their sakes, who, by my example, wait upon thee, do not deny me: let not those who take my part, and place the same confidence in thee that I do, be disappointed of their hopes; but let them be utterly defeated, who, against all law and all obligations, have broke their faith with me, and without any provocation vainly labour to destroy me.

Ver. 4. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.*] It is hard to know what to do in these difficult times, especially in this great agitation of thoughts, wherein my troubled mind is tossed up and down: therefore do thou be pleased, O Lord, to shew me the course thou wouldest have me take; and govern my actions so, that they may be pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 5. *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*] I have as much need of thy guidance, as a little child hath of its parents'; and I cry as earnestly to thee, that thou wilt direct me in every step: and especially that thou wilt preserve me as faithful to thee, as I doubt not thou wilt be to me; for thou art the author of all the deliverances I have received, and on thee I have, with a constant and perseverant hope, depended in all my trials.

Ver. 6. *Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old.*] Who art so ready to help the miserable, when they humbly seek thee, that all ages have left us remembrances of thy most compassionate bounty towards them. And therefore I beseech thee to do to me as thou hast ever done: I beg no new thing of thee, but implore that clemency and mercy which thou never yet deniedst to any pious supplicant.

Ver. 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.*] I am a sinner indeed, and began to be so very early; for in my youth I childishly and foolishly went astray from thee, and since that time have committed much more grievous offences. But thy goodness is so great, that thou art not wont to punish us according to our deserts, but to pardon us according to thy tender mercies; to which I now betake myself, beseeching thee not to consider the greatness of my sins, but only the largeness and freeness of thy mercy, which gives me hope thou wilt be graciously reconciled to me.

Ver. 8. *Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*] For such is the loving-kindness of the Lord, such is his love to rectitude and holiness; that he will rather choose to reduce sinners, and instruct them in the way of virtue, than destroy them because they have wandered from it.

Ver. 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.*] If they repent, that is, and, being troubled for what they have done amiss, meekly submit to his will and pleasure; he will sweetly direct them to discern what is acceptable to him. Such humble souls will be apt to learn, and therefore he will not fail to teach them the way to recover his favour.

Ver. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*] And when they carefully observe the covenant wherein they stand engaged to him (by obeying his laws, which testify what his will and pleasure are), he will order and dispose all things for their good, and faithfully perform the promises he hath made to such dutiful servants.

Ver. 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*] I beseech thee therefore again, by this mercy and faithfulness of thine, which shall be always celebrated and praised by me, to grant me a gracious pardon; for which I am the more earnest, because my sin is so foul, so heinous, and such a multiplied wickedness, that I can have no rest till thou art reconciled to me.

Ver. 12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*] Which if thou wilt be, O how happy shall I think myself! For he that fears to offend thy majesty (as I in all reason ought hereafter to do, both because I on no other terms expect thy merciful pardon, and have felt also the sad burden of being a sinner), him will the Lord instruct, and lead into those ways which are conformable to his blessed will, and which will prove most grateful to him that walks in them.

Ver. 13. *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*] He shall be at ease within himself, or rather filled with joy, and all manner of satisfaction: none of the blessings of this life shall be wanting to him, and he shall leave them as an inheritance to his posterity after him.

Ver. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*] Or if he fall into any straits and difficulties, the greatest comfort of all is, that the Lord is present to them that fear to do any thing displeasing to him (though it were to deliver themselves from danger), to counsel and secretly suggest good advice unto them; for he hath engaged himself to shew them what is best for their safety and preservation.

Ver. 15. *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*] In confidence of which my mind is fixed in a constant dependance upon the Lord: I expect no help from any one else, but on him will I patiently wait; for I believe he will wind me out of these perplexities, and deliver me from the snares which my enemies have laid for me.

Ver. 16. *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*] Behold, O Lord, how entirely I trust in thee; have a respect to my faith, and hope, and patience, and take pity upon me, now that thou seest I am in a manner forsaken by all, and reduced from the estate of a king to the condition of a beggar.

Ver. 17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*] Great are the oppressions that lie upon my heart, and they are still growing into new cares, and fears, and vexatious thoughts: O deliver me out of such grievous straits, which press so sore upon me.

Ver. 18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.*] Have compassion upon the miserable and toilsome life which I lead, and remove all my sins out of thy sight, which I know are the cause of it.

Ver. 19. *Consider mine enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*] Discountenance my enemies, who (as they are very numerous, so) bear an implacable hatred to me; which disposes them to do me all the mischief imaginable, though I have not been in the least injurious to them.

Ver. 20. *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.*] O preserve me from

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falling into their hands, for they seek my life, and rescue me from the danger I am now in of losing it: and let not (I again most humbly beseech thee) the trust and confidence which I repose in thee be turned into shame and confusion, as they will be if thou dost not deliver me.

Ver. 21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*] I have grievously offended thy majesty, it is true, and I have sorrowfully bewailed it; but as for them that rise up against me, they have so little reason to accuse me, that I desire thee to deal with me according to my uprightness and integrity, in all my administrations: let my innocency be my guard, and my honest dealing my protection; for I depend on nothing but thy favour in such courses.

Ver. 22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*] Nor do I plead my own private cause alone, but beseech thee to have mercy upon the whole nation, who are lamentably distracted by these divisions; and to restore them to peace and quietness, by delivering me from this rebellion that is raised against me.

PSALM XXVI.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm David asserts that uprightness and integrity, to which he pretended in the twenty-first verse of the foregoing Psalm: and appeals to God as the judge of his sincerity, who was privy to his most secret intentions. But it seems to relate to former times, when he was persecuted by Saul, and looked upon as a public enemy, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) Thus Theodoret understands it: and thinks he was now among the Philistines, or in some other strange country, into which he was some time forced by that persecution.

Ver. 1. *JUDGE me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.*] I am accused of grievous crimes by those that persecute me; but am not afraid to appeal to thee, O Lord, as the judge of that matter: nothing doubting but thou wilt acquit me, and punish my false accusers and persecutors. For, thou knowest, I kept a good conscience when I was at court; (1 Sam. xix. 4.) and since I have been banished thence, have taken no wicked course to deliver myself; (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12.) but entirely depended upon thee alone for safety: in which resolution nothing shall shake me.

Ver. 2. *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*] Thou seest into the secret thoughts of my mind, and inclinations of my will: if I have not sufficiently approved myself, to have not so much as designed any such evil as I am charged withal, go on, good Lord, to make a farther search; and if thou wilt still expose me to the fiery trial of sorer afflictions, I hope it will only still discover more of my integrity.

Ver. 3. *For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes; and I have walked in thy truth.*] For I trust to nothing but thy loving-kindness, which is the pattern I have set before my eyes to imitate: I ever designed good, not hurt, to them; and have ever kept my faith, and punctually performed my promises to them; after the example of thy truth, by which I have squared all my actions.

Ver. 4. *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.*] I never loved the company of false and treacherous persons; nor have had any thing to do with those, who, under specious shows, cover ungodly designs.

Ver. 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil-doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*] No, I perfectly hated their meetings, where they laid their heads together to contrive some evil thing or other: I never did, nor ever will, sit in consultation with those unquiet and turbulent spirits, who are restlessly hatching mischief.

Ver. 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*] I never satisfied myself with the mere ceremony of washing my hands, before I went to offer thee any sacrifice: but sincerely endeavoured, O Lord, to keep myself free from all impurity (as by that token I testified), and so presented myself, with due reverence, at thy altar:

Ver. 7. *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*] Not merely to pray to thee, when I was in any distress; but to praise thee also, and to give thee thanks; proclaiming to all thy people those stupendous things which thy admirable goodness hath done for me.

Ver. 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*] And thou knowest, O Lord, with what affection I attended upon this employment; and how glad I was to go into thy tabernacle (which thou hast been pleased to make the place where thy glory dwells among us), to offer those devout sacrifices unto thee.

Ver. 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.*] And therefore, I hope, thou wilt not let me suffer with those, from whose society I have always separated myself; O let me not perish, as if I was a murderer;

Ver. 10. *In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*] Or a companion of those that live by rapine and spoil of others, (1 Sam. xxv. 15, 16.) or obtain their ends by bribery and corruption of justice.

Ver. 11. *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*] For I am none of that number; but have always preserved, and will still continue, an upright endeavour to keep myself pure in all things: therefore, I beseech thee to deliver me, now that they seek to destroy me as an evil-doer; and shew that thou judgest otherways of me.

Ver. 12. *My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregation will I bless the Lord.*] Why should I doubt of it, when, notwithstanding all the assaults of mine enemies, I stand firm and unshaken? Surely the time will come when I shall publicly praise the Lord, my protector and deliverer, in the assemblies of his people; from whence this unjust persecution hath driven me, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.)

PSALM XXVII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David, when he was, or had been lately, in some great distress. It is not easy to resolve,

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whether it were when he was persecuted by Saul before he was crowned (as the LXX. now say, though Theodoret could find no such thing in the Hexaplus); or when he was forced to fly from Absalom; or, as some of the Jews think (which seems most probable, because it agrees very well with several passages in the Psalm), when, in fight with the Philistines, he had engaged himself so far among the enemies, that he was in danger of being killed by a giant, if Abishai had not seasonably stepped in and relieved him. This was in his declining years, when the same courage remained, but not the same strength, which he had in his youth. And therefore the people came and sware to him, saying, "Thou shalt go out no more with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel," (2 Sam. xxi. 17.)

Ver. 1. *THE Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*] The Lord still bears a favour to me, and fills me with joy by his wonderful preservation of me. What enemy then is so terrible, that I should not dare to engage him? He defends my life in the most dangerous assaults; of whom then, though he be never so great a giant, should I stand in fear?

Ver. 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*] When malicious men, full of hatred and rage, made their approaches so near me, that they hoped, like so many savage beasts, to tear me in pieces and devour me; they quite missed their aim, and fell down dead at my feet.

Ver. 3. *Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*] And therefore, though I should see myself besieged with a great army of enemies, it shall not dismay me; though I were to fight a battle with the most numerous forces, I shall not, after such a demonstration of God's love and careful providence over me, despair of victory.

Ver. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*] Not that I am greedy of glory and fame by such marvellous successes: no, I can stay at home, as my people desire me, (2 Sam. xxi. 17.) and give God thanks for what he hath done for me. Nothing in the world agrees so much with my desires: this is the only thing I have sought (even by my wars), and will still make the end of all my endeavours, that I may perpetually attend upon the service of God in the holy assemblies; and enjoy the sweet pleasure the Lord is pleased there to impart to his people, and receive directions from him when I wait upon him every morning in his tabernacle.

Ver. 5. *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*] For there I shall think myself as secure in troublesome times as if I was environed with the strongest bulwarks, or lay obscured in the most secret hiding-places: the most impregnable rock I should not take to be a place of greater safety.

Ver. 6. *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*] And now I have felt the happy fruit of my love towards it; for the Lord hath given me a glorious victory, and made me triumph over all my enemies on every side. For which cause I will go thither, and offer sacrifices of thanksgiving with the highest expressions of joy: I will compose songs of praise, and therein set forth the power and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Ver. 7. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*] On whom I still depend for my future preservation; beseeching thee, O Lord, to give me a gracious audience: whensoever I address myself unto thee, shew then the kindness thou hast for me by granting my desire.

Ver. 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*] Which I do not presume to offer to thee without thy invitation; but have still thy own words in my mind whereby thou exhortest us to come unto thee, saying, *Seek ye my face:* to which my heart answers, Behold, O Lord, in obedience to thy command, and by thy gracious motion, I will never cease to seek it.

Ver. 9. *Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation*] And thou, I hope, will look favourably upon me; and not withdraw thy presence from me, when I beg thy protection or assistance. Do not then in anger reject my suits, because I am a sinner; but accept them because I am thy servant: whom in former times thou hast so often relieved, that from thence also I am emboldened to beseech thee not to desert me, O Lord; but (as thou hast begun, so) continue to give me deliverance and safety.

Ver. 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*] The indulgence of my parents is not to be compared with thy most tender affection; but though they, and all the friends I have, should abandon me, I would hope the Lord would take me into his care, and not suffer me to perish.

Ver. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path; because of mine enemies.*] As I certainly shall, if thou leavest me to myself. For, alas! I know not what course it is best for me to take for my safety: and therefore beseech thee to vouchsafe me thy direction; and enable me to walk so circumspectly and evenly, that they who narrowly pry into all my actions, and watch for my halting, may have no advantage against me.

Ver. 12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*] Let not those have their will of me, who love to trouble me, and give me perpetual disturbance; as too many still do, notwithstanding all the wonderful things thou hast wrought for me. They cease not to calumniate and defame my government; and he that heads them, and sets them on, speaks of open force and violence, if he had opportunity.

Ver. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*] Good God! how had it been possible for me to support myself under so many troubles and fears, which follow one upon another; if I had not firmly trusted in thee, that, notwithstanding the restless malice of my enemies, I shall enjoy thee, in a prosperous and happy condition, even here in this present life?

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Ver. 14. *Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*] And let me admonish thee, whosoever thou art, that shalt hereafter fall into any such straits, to learn, by my example, not to be impatient, nor despond presently, much less despair of relief, if the Lord do not send it just when thou expectest it: but wait upon him still with a steadfast hope, and fortify thyself with a strong faith in him. Let not thy heart fail thee in the greatest danger; but, as I said, wait upon the Lord, and confidently expect that in his good time he will relieve thee.

PSALM XXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

Theodoret thinks this Psalm was composed by David during Saul's persecution, when he was betrayed by those whom he took for friends, or not for his enemies: such as Doeg, the Ziphites, and many others. But the matter of this Psalm inclines me to consider it as a meditation, on some such occasion as moved him to pen the foregoing. For he blesses God in the latter part of it (ver. 7, 8.) for the victories he had got over his enemies, and for the peace he enjoyed: and yet complains in the beginning of it, of some men who molested him, and sought an occasion to do him a mischief. See 2 Sam. xxi. 18—20. where we read of three battles between his forces and the Philistines, after that mentioned in the argument of Psalm xxvii. when, it is likely, some of his own subjects took an opportunity to give him some disturbance.

Ver. 1. *UNTO thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*] O Lord, to whom alone I betake myself for safety, and under whose protection nothing can hurt me; I make my most earnest prayer unto thee, that thou wilt defend me. Do not deny me, I most humbly beseech thee; lest, while I am so importunate with thee, and confide so entirely in thee, and yet thou takest no notice of me, I look like one that is abandoned by thee to destruction.

Ver. 2. *Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle.*] Grant my desires, therefore, when with ardent affection I seek thy favour, and, renouncing all dependance on human succour, implore thy help; which thou art wont to send from thy holy place.

Ver. 3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity; which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*] Let not that destruction seize on me, which is the portion of the wicked: nor suffer me to be involved in the same punishment with those pernicious wretches, who make no conscience what villanies they commit; and yet pretend the greatest friendship to their neighbours, when they design and are contriving their ruin.

Ver. 4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*] It is fit that they suffer as they have done, and reap the fruit of their manifold wickedness: dispense a reward to them according to their works; and deal with them (which is the measure whereby I desire thou wilt proceed with me) as they have dealt with others.

Ver. 5. *Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*] I know thou wilt: because they regard not the wonderful things thou hast done for me, and by me; particularly that great work (which is to be ascribed to thy power alone) of making me their king; thou wilt utterly overturn them without any hope of their being raised up again.

Ver. 6. *Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*] And I ought never to forget (that which they neglect) the singular providence of the Lord over me; whom I therefore bless and praise, because he heard my prayer when I was in distress; and desire all ages may ever praise him.

Ver. 7. *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*] The Lord is to me instead of a fortress and shield, when my enemies assault me: I heartily confided in him, that he would defend me; and, behold, he sent seasonable succour to me, (2 Sam. xxi. 17.) which fills my heart with such exceeding joy, that (as I cannot express it, so) I am not able to contain myself; but I must compose a hymn in his praise, and say,

Ver. 8. *The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*] It is the Lord that gives courage and strength to those that are on my side: he is the fortress that preserves in safety him whom he hath appointed to be the king of his people:

Ver. 9. *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*] Whose good and happiness I seek; beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve thy people, and to pour down thy blessings upon those whom thou hast appropriated to thyself, out of all other nations: take care of them, as a shepherd doth of his flock; and make them victorious over all their enemies, both now and in all future generations.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seems to have been composed by David after some extraordinary great thunder, lightning, and rain; whereby (it is probable) God had so discomfited his enemies, and put their forces into such disorder, that he easily got the victory over them. Whereupon he exhorts them in this Psalm to submit to that glorious Majesty, from whom that thunder came: and who can so easily strike a sudden terror into the hearts of his stoutest and most resolved opposers. Theodoret applies it to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, in Hezekiah's time; for which I see no foundation: nor for the title which is now in the LXX. (but Theodoret could not find in the Hexaplus); which makes the occasion of it to be David's bringing the ark to the place he had prepared for it.

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Ver. 1. *GIVE unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.*] O ye princes and rulers of the world, who so readily receive the lowest prostrations from your subjects; give unto the Lord of all that honour which he justly expects from you: acknowledge his supreme power, which you have so lately felt; and submit to his authority.

Ver. 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*] Do him honour suitable to the excellence of his majesty: and, as a sign you have him in great veneration, come and cast down yourselves before him in the sanctuary; where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us.

Ver. 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters.*] Whose voice was it but his, which you heard in the clouds? (whither the voice of no earthly monarch can reach.) From thence his glorious majesty thunders; and makes not only the earth, but the great ocean, tremble, at that token of his presence.

Ver. 4. *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.*] You think there is great power in your words: but as they can be heard but a little way, so they are of little force, in comparison with this mighty voice; wherein the Lord expresses how potent he is; and strikes a dread and horror into all that hear it.

Ver. 5. *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*] It makes the strongest trees of the forest quake; nay, breaks them into shivers: the cedars, as hard and tall as they are; even the cedars of Libanus, which are framed for their durableness and goodly bulk, are thrown down and shattered by it.

Ver. 6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*] It lifts them up into the air when it hath torn them in pieces; and makes the mountains themselves leap like the young creatures which live upon them.

Ver. 7. *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.*] Flashes of fire break out together with it; and, cutting their way through the clouds, are scattered, with a wonderful swiftness, into all quarters.

Ver. 8. *The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*] The force of it is felt in the most desert places, even in that vast and horrid wilderness of Kadesh; which, by overthrowing trees and rocks, it renders still more horrid.

Ver. 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*] It opens the wombs of hinds, which otherwise bring forth with the greatest difficulty: and it lays bare the covers of the wild beasts in the forest, whom it frightens into their dens, while his temple remains unshaken by these tempestuous blasts, and all his pious worshippers there securely sing the praises of his glorious majesty and power, saying,

Ver. 10. *The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.*] The Lord is the great King, who governs even the clouds, and orders the thunder-showers, to do what execution he pleases. When all other monarchs fail, the Lord still remains the same throughout all generations; and the thunder doth not more easily tear the trees and rocks, than he can break in pieces the proudest princes: who ought therefore to tremble before him, and to dread his judgments.

Ver. 11. *The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.*] But as for all those that are sincerely devoted to his service, though never so weak and feeble, the Lord will be their support: they may depend upon his power to defend them in the greatest dangers, and against the mightiest enemies: the Lord will not only preserve them from evil, but bless and prosper them with all manner of happiness.

PSALM XXX.

A Psalm and Song, at the Dedication of the House of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this Psalm differs from all the foregoing; it being the first that is called a *Psalm and Song*, or a *Psalm-Song*: as others, we shall see in due place, are called a *Song and Psalm*, or a *Song-Psalm*. The difference of which it is hard to find out. (See Argument of Psal. lxvii.) But here the words may be otherwise construed; for they run currently enough in the Hebrew; thus, *A Psalm, A Song of Dedication of the House made by David;* who would not eat in his house till he had first, in a solemn manner, addressed himself to God, at his entrance into it; either after it was newly built, (2 Sam. v. 11.) or (which agrees best with a great part of the Psalm) when he returned to it again, after he had been driven from it by the rebellion of Absalom, who defiled it. (2 Sam. xvi. 21.) Then he gave God thanks for his being restored to a peaceable possession of his palace; and made a feast for his friends (as the manner was, at their coming to dwell in a new-built house), with extraordinary piety and devotion, acknowledging God's goodness, who had graciously reinstated him in his throne. The Talmudists generally understand by *the house* here mentioned, the house of the sanctuary; (see Mr. Selden, lib. iii. de Synedr. cap. 13.) but I see no ground for it: for David did not build God a house, nor do the words of the Psalm (as Theodoret observes) agree to that matter.

Ver. 1. *I WILL extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*] O Lord, to whose powerful providence I ascribe my late wonderful deliverance, I will give thee the highest praises, and never cease to magnify thy name; who hast drawn me up out of that depth of misery into which I was plunged, and filled me with that joy which my enemies hoped to have had in my destruction.

Ver. 2. *O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*] O Lord, my gracious God, I was in a most forlorn and languishing condition; like a sick man who cannot help himself: but I addressed myself in earnest prayer to thee; and thou hast restored me to my former estate again.

Ver. 3. *O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*] Which mercy is the more to be admired, because there seemed to be no more hope of my restoration, than there is of the resurrection of a dead man out of his grave;

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or, at best, of a sick man's recovery, that is just at the point of death.

Ver. 4. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*] Join with me then, all ye that are sensible of the Divine benefits, in this duty of praise to him who hath called me from death unto life again: give thanks together with me (for my single praises and thanksgivings are not sufficient), and gratefully commemorate his power, and goodness, and wisdom, and truth, which he hath shewn in my restitution.

Ver. 5. *For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*] Wherein you may see his clemency towards his faithful servants: whom he may correct very sharply, for a little time; but is soon reconciled, and then extends his favour to them without any end: and sends them deliverance so unexpectedly and suddenly, as well as seasonably, that where nothing but lamentations were heard over night, there nothing but shouts of joy are heard in the morning.

Ver. 6. *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.*] Yet that must not make them secure, nor confident in any thing but his goodness alone. For therein I was to blame, that when I was delivered from the persecution of Saul, and settled peaceably in my kingdom, I fancied vainly, that now I should never be any more disturbed.

Ver. 7. *Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*] But I soon found that that was more than I could promise myself; and that it depended solely on thy favour, O Lord, by whom my throne was established in the strong fortress of Zion, (2 Sam. v. 7. 9.) For thou, being offended with me, didst withdraw thy gracious presence from me; and presently I was involved in new troubles and dangers.

Ver. 8. *I cried unto thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication.*] And had no way to relieve myself, but by making my addresses to thee, O Lord; and earnestly beseeching thee to pardon me, and restore me to thy favour.

Ver. 9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?*] For what service, said I, can I do thee when I am dead? shall my ashes be able so much as to praise thy goodness, or declare thy faithfulness to thy promises? Will they not rather seem to fail, and lose their credit, together with me? Spare me therefore, O Lord, and deliver me from those that seek my life: let me live, to tell how good and how true thou art.

Ver. 10. *Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.*] Do not deny me, O Lord, but take compassion upon my sad estate. Lord, be thou my helper; who art able to restore me to my former happiness, without any other assistance; as thou alone, I am sensible, not the strongest guards, canst preserve me in it.

Ver. 11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.*] In this manner I humbly besought thy mercy, and obtained a gracious answer: for joy and gladness are returned again, after a short time of sadness and sorrow.

Ver. 12. *To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*] Which engages me to do thee all the service I am able; and, in the most magnificent manner, to sing thy praises without ceasing. O Lord, my most gracious God, I will be as good as my resolution; and spend my whole life in giving thanks unto thee, for thy faithful mercy towards me.

PSALM XXXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle: wherein he describes his confidence in God, notwithstanding a grievous strait wherein he was; when (as I understand it), after his escape from Keilah, Saul, with three battalions (as we now speak), pursued him so close in the wilderness of Maon, that without an extraordinary providence of God over him, he had certainly fallen into his hands. To that strange deliverance, and not that from Absalom (to which Theodoret refers it), it is the more probable he hath a respect in this Psalm (in the latter end of which it is thankfully commemorated), because the haste, which the Psalmist here saith (ver. 22.) he made in that sore distress, is expressed by the very same word (and used no where else in any other part of David's history), when the great fright he was in, and his sudden speedy flight from one place to another, is described, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.

Ver. 1. *IN thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*] Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these persecutions which I endure, I have no confidence in any thing, but only thy power and goodness; which if they should fail me, I should be lamentably ashamed; prevent that confusion, O Lord, and magnify thy own mercy and fidelity, by preserving me in, and delivering me out, of these dangers which now encompass me.

Ver. 2. *Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for a house of defence to save me.*] Graciously incline to favour my request, now that I am so sorely pressed by my enemies, that they are ready to seize on me; haste thy relief, for it is not this rock or strong hold wherein I am (1 Sam. xxiii. 25.) that can protect me, but only thou, O Lord; to whom I resort as a more sure defence, than the most impregnable fortress in the world:

Ver. 3. *For thou art my rock and my fortress: therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me.*] For so I have hitherto found thee, in all my distresses, and therefore I still flee to thee for safety; beseeching thee to glorify thyself (I have no other argument whereby to move thee) in leading me out of this strait, and guiding my steps so, that I may not fall into the hands of my enemies:

Ver. 4. *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me; for thou art my strength.*] Who have now so circumvented me, and, by the secret treachery of the Ziphites, brought me into such perplexities, (1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20, &c.) that I am undone, unless thou extricate me: as I hope thou wilt; for I profess again, that I depend on thee alone for help and deliverance.

Ver. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*] Unto thy care and custody I commit myself, and deposit my very life with

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thee.* Who hast so often rescued me, when I was like to lose it; and wilt still, I doubt not, shew thyself my most gracious God, as well as powerful Lord; who never deceivest those that rely upon thy faithful word.

[* *Our Saviour used these words in a more proper and literal sense than they can be applied to David.*]

Ver. 6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.*] There is nothing else that I rely upon, for I never inquired of diviners, wizards, soothsayers, or fortune-tellers; nor consulted the necromancers (or any other of those vanities wherewith the gentile world is cheated), which way I should flee, or how I should provide for my safety: no, I have hated all such practices, and those that observe them; confiding entirely in the Lord, and his directions.

Ver. 7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.*] In whose merciful providence over me I will be glad and rejoice, even when I am in straits: for it is most delightful to remember how thou hast taken care of me in my afflictions; and never neglected, but still owned me, and provided for my security, in the greatest distresses.

Ver. 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.*] And very lately didst not suffer me to be shut up in Keilah, (1 Sam. xxiii. 7.) whose inhabitants would have delivered me into the hand of Saul: but admonishedst me by thy oracles, at which only I inquired, (ver. 9, &c.) to depart from thence, where I was in danger to be enclosed; and gavest me a larger compass, to seek the means of my preservation.

Ver. 9. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.*] Go on, good Lord, to perfect thy mercy to me; and now that I am fallen into a new difficulty, and closely begirt on every side by my enemy, take some pity upon me, and speedily deliver me: for the continual anguish and vexation which these returning dangers give me, together with the hunger and thirst which at present sorely pinch me, have in a manner quite dispirited me.

Ver. 10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*] I cannot subsist long, unless thou relievest me; for I am wasted away with sorrow and sighing; the punishments of my sins are so heavy, and I am so weak, that I cannot support myself under their burdens.

Ver. 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.*] My enemies also mock at my confidence in thee, now that they have thus distressed me; and my neighbours, who have been witnesses of my integrity in all my actions, are too prone to join with them in those reproaches; and, which is still sadder, my familiar friends are afraid to be seen in my company, or to send me the least relief: they dare not entertain me into their houses; for when they have met me in the highway, they fled, and would not come nigh me.

Ver. 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.*] They look upon me as a man utterly lost; and so never think of me no more than if I were in my grave: they despair of my restitution, and despise me as much as an earthen vessel when it is broken in pieces, which nobody minds, because it cannot be repaired.

Ver. 13. *For I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*] The calumnies and slanders also whereby the greatest persons defame me are come to my ears. They say I am a seditious fellow; that the life of the king cannot be in safety till I be destroyed: and so they have held consultation together against me; wherein they have debated nothing else, but how to find a way to take away my life.

Ver. 14. *But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.*] But how great soever their cunning and their power be, and how dejecting soever my fears, I do not quite despond: but still repose a sure confidence in thee, O Lord, saying, Thou art a judge of my innocence; thou art my defender and protector, who hath hitherto always done me right.

Ver. 15. *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*] It is not in their power to dispose of my life at their pleasure; no more than it is in mine to appoint the time of my deliverance, which I leave to thy wisdom, O Lord, to whom it belongs: only beseeching thee, at present, to rescue me from falling into the hands of my enemies; and at last, when thou judgest it most fit, to free me from their persecution.

Ver. 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.*] Disperse these black clouds of affliction, which have so long kept me in such a mournful condition, that my enemies fancy thou hast abandoned me; and shew the favour thou bearest to me, who am faithfully devoted to thy service; and therefore, though I am unworthy of it, yet hope thou wilt magnify thy own mercy in delivering me from these dangers, and making me as happy as now I am miserable.

Ver. 17. *Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*] Let not thy humble supplicant, O Lord, who testifies by his daily prayers that he wholly depends upon thy favour, be shamefully disappointed in his expectation of relief from thee: but let the wicked be confounded, to see all their contrivances against me come to nothing; let them be laid in their graves, and give me no farther disturbance.

Ver. 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*] Stop the mouths of those bold calumniators who insolently threaten utter ruin to the innocent: whom they charge with the most grievous crimes, and deride all that he can say or do in his own defence.

Ver. 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*] Oh what a comfort is it, when they thus insult, to think of thy kind intentions towards those that fear to offend thee, though for the present they are most miserably abused! How great are the blessings thou hast treasured up in store (as shall in time appear openly before all the world), and prepared for those that religiously avoid all unjust ways of preserving themselves, and trust to thee alone!

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Ver. 20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*] They are forced to hide themselves sometimes in caves and dens of the earth, (1 Sam. xxiii. 14. 19. 23. xxiv. 2. 3. 8.) but there thou art present with them; and it is thy gracious providence that preserves them from him that furiously persecutes them: thou dost keep them as safe as if they were in thy dwelling-place, from the mischiefs which contentious men, by their false accusations, seek to bring upon them.

Ver. 21. *Blessed be the Lord; for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.*] Of which I myself (for ever praised be the Lord) am a remarkable instance: for he hath magnified his mercy to me in assisting my escape, when I was shut up in a fortified city that had gates and bars, (1 Sam. xxiii. 7. 13.)

Ver. 22. *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*] And presently after that, when I fell into such a strait, that I had no hope of evading it, but (so vehement was my fear) said in my precipitous flight, (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) I am lost; I shall never be able to save myself, though I make never so much haste: yet even then, upon my humble supplication to thee, thou didst instantly send a most seasonable and wonderful deliverance to me, (ver. 27.)

Ver. 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*] What an encouragement is this to all truly pious souls! Let them love the Lord, and steadfastly cleave unto him: for the Lord taketh care of their safety, who continue faithful to him in all their troubles: and plagueth those who proudly insult over them, till he hath left none of their race remaining.

Ver. 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*] Be not dejected, therefore, much less disheartened in the course of piety, all ye that place your hope and confidence in the Lord: but let that fill you with courage; and make you firmly resolved to adhere to him, and never to shrink from your duty under the sorest afflictions.

PSALM XXXII.

A Psalm of David. Maschil.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David, when the calamities into which he fell by his son's rebellion taught him how evil and bitter a thing it was to offend God; and how infinitely he was beholden to him, that he was so merciful as not to take such a vengeance on him as his sins deserved. There are those who think it was intended for public use, upon the great day of expiation, when the whole nation made a general confession of their sins: and called *Maschil*, either because it contains an excellent *instruction* (as that word signifies), concerning the means to obtain true blessedness; or because it was set to the tune of a song, in vulgar use in those days, which began with the word *Maschil*. This is the more probable of the two, because there are twelve Psalms besides this that have the same title, to all of which the former reason cannot be applied.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*] Happy is that man, thrice happy, to whom God will be pleased, out of his own free grace and mercy (for no man can merit such a favour by any services that he can do him), to remit not only his common errors and weaknesses, but also his grosser sins, whether committed against the Divine Majesty, or against his neighbour.

Ver. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*] It is impossible to express the happiness of that man, to whom the Lord will be so gracious, as not to exact the punishment due to his former offences, for which he is most heartily afflicted (for to none else this happiness belongs): and doth not only seem, by his sorrowful confessions, to hate and abhor them, but is unfeignedly resolved to forsake them.

Ver. 3. *When I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long.*] He that hath felt the smart of them, as I have done, will be sensible what a pleasure it is to be eased of such a sting. For when I seriously reflected upon the grievous sin I had committed, but not bewailed it as I ought, it filled me with such anguish and horror, that I lost all appetite to my meat, and pined away till I was not able to go or stand; but lay roaring perpetually (like a lion that hath received a deadly wound), under the miserable torture of my mind.

Ver. 4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*] So heavy was the sense of thy displeasure, wherewith I was struck, that I could find no means to throw it off, either by business or diversions in the day: nor would it suffer me to take my rest in the night, but still pressed down my spirit, and scorched me so vehemently with its raging heat, that my body (which heretofore was fat and fresh) was consumed and parched like the grass of the earth in the midst of the driest summer.

Ver. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*] But at last I bethought myself of that remedy which I had too long neglected; and humbled myself before thee in a sorrowful confession of all my sins, both great and small: I laid open all those wounds which were so full of anguish, and acknowledged I deserved to be still far more miserable: I resolved I would never hereafter palliate or excuse my sins; but ingenuously charge myself home with them, and condemn myself before thee for them. And straightway thou (who sawest the sincerity of my repentance) was pleased to grant me a gracious pardon, and to release me from all my pain: though my guilt, which was the cause of it, was exceeding great.

Ver. 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*] Which should encourage every one that hath any sense of God, and of the blessedness of being in his favour, and the misery of lying under his displeasure, to apply himself speedily to him, by unfeigned repentance, as soon as ever he hath offended him: for that is the surest time of finding mercy with him; and the way of preventing those great calamities, which otherwise may overtake him, when the

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Lord sends a deluge of miseries, as he did in the days of Noah, upon the world of the ungodly.

Ver. 7. *Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.*] Then he may say, Thou, Lord, art my refuge, to whom I fly for safety; and I trust that thou wilt preserve me (though I have been a grievous sinner) from those distresses which surround me; and thereby give abundant cause to me, and all that are about me, to bless and praise thee for thy merciful deliverance of me.

Ver. 8. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*] Hearken therefore unto me, whosoever thou art who hast any care of thy salvation; and I will bestow some good advice upon thee, and direct thee into the wisest and safest course of life: trust thyself with me to be thy guide, and I from my own experience will give thee faithful counsel, and take care thou do not go amiss.

Ver. 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*] God hath endued you with reason, both to tell you what you ought to do, and to check you when you do not as you ought; and hath made you capable also of receiving good admonitions from others: do not therefore follow your own unbridled lusts and appetites, much less be refractory and untractable, when God would reduce you from the error of your ways; as if you were not men, but headstrong horses and mules, who can by no means be curbed, nor made to come near thee, that thou mayest manage them at thy pleasure.

Ver. 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.*] Let such ungovernable, obdurate sinners expect to be handled like those brutes, for they shall receive many and grievous strokes, which shall make their hearts to ache. But he that entirely commits himself to the Lord, to be ruled and disposed of according to his will, shall be not only secured by his good providence, but enriched with abundance of his blessings.

Ver. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*] And therefore whatsoever your present troubles may be, let your heart be glad, O ye that are obediently led and governed by him: rejoice in the confidence you ought to have of his favour towards you: triumph in his loving-kindness, all ye that sincerely study to do his will; and shout for joy, as if you were already victorious over all your enemies.

PSALM XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

It is not recorded by whom this Psalm was composed, nor upon what occasion. But there is little question it was a pious meditation of David (of whose spirit it savours), and, as we may guess, upon occasion of some special benefit received from God (though not particularly mentioned); which makes him call it (ver. 3.) *a new song.* (Of which see more, Psal. cxlix.) Wherein he desires all the faithful to join with him in joyful praises of the Lord; considering his excellent nature, and his admirable works, both of creation and providence; especially over good men, who piously trust in him, and expect all good from him; and therefore ought to think themselves blessed that they have relation to him.

Ver. 1. *REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.*] Bless the Lord with joyful hearts, triumph in his praise, all ye that are just and good: for nothing is more becoming them that sincerely do the will of God, than to praise him, from whom they have received, and hope, for so many benefits; and nothing is more desired than to have your hearts perpetually filled with delightful thoughts of him.

Ver. 2. *Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto him with the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.*] Extol therefore his glorious perfections in psalms and hymns, composed in praise of him: and let all the instruments of music accompany the voices, to express and excite your joy in him.

Ver. 3. *Sing unto him a new song, play skilfully with a loud noise.*] Let not the ancient songs of praise suffice you, but indite a new hymn, to testify your singular love and gratitude to him: employ your best skill to make the sweetest music; and sing as cheerfully as you are wont to do at your most solemn feasts.

Ver. 4. *For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.*] For the Lord hath graciously revealed his will unto you, and shewn you the right way, in which, if you walk, you cannot miss of being happy: and whatever he doeth, hath the same scope with what he saith; for in all that befals you, he faithfully designs your good.

Ver. 5. *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*] Let this therefore be part of your song, The Lord governs the world with perfect justice and equity; these he loves, and in these he delights: his goodness and mercy also are so conspicuous, that we can look no where but we see innumerable proofs of his bounty towards us; which spreads itself over the face of the whole earth.

Ver. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*] And who can doubt of the greatness of his power, when he beholds the spacious heavens; with the sun, moon, and all the stars, which are placed there like an army in excellent order; and considers that all these he made with the same ease that we speak a word, only by commanding them to be?

Ver. 7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*] Nay, the earth itself declares how mighty he is: for when it lay covered with the waters, being far heavier than they, he commanded it to appear, (Gen. i. 9, 10.) and, cutting a deep channel for them, he laid them up there as in cellars; where they swell and rise up in round heaps, higher than the shore, but cannot overflow the earth.

Ver. 8. *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*] Let all mankind, therefore, in whatsoever part of the world they dwell, dread this almighty Lord: let them not dare to disobey him, who thus tamed even the raging sea.

Ver. 9. *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*] For as then he did but signify his pleasure, and the thing was done, and remained fixed and firm according to his appointment: so, whatsoever he will have now to be done (whether for a blessing on those that sub-

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mit to him, or a punishment of the disobedient), it shall certainly come to pass; and none can resist or alter his orders.

Ver. 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.*] Let men lay their designs never so deep, let whole nations combine together, and in their gravest assemblies consult how to compass their ends; the Lord (such is his wisdom, as well as his power) easily disappoints them all: and makes the most likely contrivances, which oppose his will, to be in vain and without success.

Ver. 11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*] Whereas that which he resolves none can defeat; but shall certainly obtain its effect. One generation passes away, and another comes in its stead; but his purposes are still immoveably the same, and can no more in future ages than now be overthrown.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*] Most happy then is that nation which worships this Lord, the creator of heaven and earth: unspeakably happy are they who live under the care of so just, so good, so powerful, and wise a being, and are so highly in his favour, that he hath chosen them (though all mankind be his) to be a peculiar people to himself; among whom, in a special manner, he will reside, and hath engaged himself by a gracious covenant to do them good.

Ver. 13. *The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men.*] How careful ought they to be to please him, and approve their very hearts unto him! for though he be in heaven, as the place of his most special and most glorious presence, yet there is not a man upon earth but he sees and observes him.

Ver. 14. *From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*] They are all exposed to his view; and from thence he takes a strict and exact account, not only of all their open actions, but of their most secret designs and contrivances.

Ver. 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*] For they are every one of them, without exception, his creatures: and as he is equally the former of them all, so he formed their souls as well as their bodies; and therefore must needs see into their very hearts, and be perfectly acquainted with every one of their thoughts.

Ver. 16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*] And to him a king is no more than another man; but if he sees that he regards not his majesty, nor depends upon him, he will make him find, that it is not in the power of the greatest army he can raise to secure and defend him: nor shall the mightiest and most valiant man in that army be able to deliver so much as himself, though he hath a giant-like strength.

Ver. 17. *A horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*] Though he should be mounted upon the stoutest horse (which is a most warlike creature), he will but deceive himself, if he rely either upon his courage, or his strength, or his agility, or his swiftness, for preservation.

Ver. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.*] It is the Lord only from whom comes salvation; and he hath regard to none but those that fear to offend his majesty, and, placing their confidence and hope in his love, more than all human force, look up to him for safety. Over such he will watch with a very careful providence.

Ver. 19. *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*] To rescue them when they are in danger by the sword or the plague; and to supply their necessities in time of scarcity and dearth.

Ver. 20. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.*] What shall we do therefore in all straits, but desire him to take care of us? For this is our peculiar privilege, that we may confidently expect and wait for his seasonable relief, who is our only helper and defender.

Ver. 21. *For our heart shall rejoice in him; because we have trusted in his holy name.*] For we may be sure he will not fail our expectations, but at the last fill our hearts with joy, as a reward of the pious trust we have reposed in him; whose unspotted purity and faithfulness shall be ever famed.

Ver. 22. *Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*] O Lord, thou seest we depend upon thee alone, and have placed all our hope, all our comfort and contentment, in thy care and good providence over us: let us prosper accordingly; deal with us according as we trust in thee, and not in any strength, wisdom, or contrivance, of our own.

PSALM XXXIV.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his Behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

ARGUMENT.

The title tells us this Psalm was penned by David, after the escape he made from Achish, king of Gath (in which country all their kings were called by the common name of *Abimelech*, i. e. *My father the king;* as in Egypt, anciently, they were all called Pharaoh, and afterward Ptolemy), who he was afraid would seize on him, when he heard it commonly reported that he was the person that killed Goliath, and pretended to the sovereignty over all those countries: (1 Sam. xxi. 11.) and therefore he put on the behaviour of a man beside himself; hoping that when Achish saw this he would despise him: and looking upon him as a useless man, that could do neither good nor harm, think fit to thrust him out of his court, where he had been entertained, and send him packing from thence. And accordingly it succeeded. (1 Sam. xxi. 14, 15.) But though he was preserved by this artifice, the deliverance notwithstanding is piously ascribed unto God's great mercy, who prospered the device. To whom therefore he would have all pious men commit themselves, and depend upon his favour in well-doing: which he declares is the sure course to be happy. The Psalm is curiously composed, according to the number and order of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in the beginning of every verse; which shews it was contrived, when he reflected upon his escape, in some place of safety.

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Ver. 1. *I WILL bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*] I will never forget how gracious the Lord hath been to me in this remarkable deliverance; but, whatsoever my condition be, will still have my mind and my mouth perpetually filled with his praise.

Ver. 2. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*] This shall be my glory; in this I will think myself happy, that the Lord is with me, wheresoever I am, to guide and defend me: and I will let all those that humbly depend on him know what he hath done for me; that they may likewise joyfully hope for his mercy.

Ver. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.*] Oh that they would all join with me in declaring the greatness of his goodness, in this miraculous providence over me! Let them with the same devout affection extol him in all his glorious attributes; who hath given *me* such a deliverance, and *them* such hope in the greatest danger.

Ver. 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*] I was sore afraid (1 Sam. xxi. 12.) when I found they had discovered me in the court of Achish who I was; and many a sad thought and dreadful apprehension began then to trouble my mind: but committing myself to thee by hearty prayer, and desiring thee to be my guide and my protector; thou wast pleased presently to rid me of them, by inclining his heart to look upon me as I appeared, and to make no stricter inquiry after me.

Ver. 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*] From which all pious men should take courage in all their straits, and when their hearts are ready to sink, look up unto God: who will revive and comfort them, and never suffer them to be ashamed of the hope they repose in him.

Ver. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*] Let them fix their eyes on me, and excite one another to a cheerful dependance on him, saying, Behold that man: he was in a miserably poor condition, destitute of all human help; but commending himself to the Lord by earnest prayer, the Lord took care of him, and delivered him out of all his distresses.

Ver. 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*] Why should we then despair of his mercy, who sends an invisible host (as appeared to Elisha) to guard those who fear nothing so much as to offend his majesty; and to preserve them as securely as if they were surrounded with an invincible army from all the assaults of their enemies?

Ver. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*] Oh that men would not be so negligent, but seriously consider this, and make a trial, by steadfast fidelity to God in all their troubles, how gracious and kind he is! They shall soon find that there is no man so happy as he that piously confides in him.

Ver. 9. *O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*] Continue therefore, O ye devout worshippers of the Lord (whatsoever other men do), to fear nothing, but lest you be false to him. Never betake yourselves to any sinful ways to provide for your safety, or to supply any of your necessities: but religiously observe his command; and you shall never be reduced to such straits, as to be utterly destitute of what is needful for your preservation.

Ver. 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*] The young lions (an emblem of those that seek to enrich themselves by rapine, or by injurious practices), who are most ravenous in their appetites, as well as swift to pursue, and bold to seize, and strong to tear in pieces, their prey, are many times disappointed, and cannot meet with satisfaction to their hungry desires; but they that seek their food from the Lord in pious and honest ways, shall certainly be blessed with every thing that is good for them.

Ver. 11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*] Come hither then, all ye that are disposed to learn, and hearken to the instruction which, out of a most tender affection to your welfare, I shall give you, concerning the fear of the Lord.

Ver. 12. *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?*] Who is there among you that desires to live happily? that would fain prolong his life to a great number of years, and have them all prosperous and pleasant?

Ver. 13. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*] Let him be very careful, in the first place, to bridle his tongue; and never employ it to speak evil of others, or to deceive them with fair words and false promises.

Ver. 14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*] Let him in all his actions also eschew what God hath prohibited, and do what he hath commanded: and, more particularly, avoiding all hatreds and enmities, strife and contention, study to maintain love and friendship with all his neighbours, and to make peace among them when they quarrel; and though they be averse to it, not to cease his importunities, till, if it be possible, he hath reconciled them.

Ver. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*] Such men will feel great contentment in their own hearts, and be exceedingly beloved by others: and (which is the greatest happiness of all) the Lord will have a special care of them; and, when they are in any distress, most readily hear their cry, and help them.

Ver. 16. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*] But as for all those that take the contrary course (besides that they are ill at ease in themselves, and hated by their neighbours), the Lord is their enemy: and in his heavy displeasure will utterly destroy both them and theirs.

Ver. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*] Experience hath taught us this (and therefore let them not be disheartened if they fall into any trouble, but still expect good days), that the Lord graciously answers the prayers of those who adhere unto him in the ways of piety and peaceableness, and sends them seasonable relief and deliverance.

Ver. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*] Though he may seem to absent himself, by suffering them to be sorely bruised and crushed under their burdens: yet he is really present to them to support and comfort their droop-

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ing spirits; and at last to ease them of their burdens after they have humbly and patiently submitted to them.

Ver. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*] Many of these afflictions there may be (for such prosperity they must not promise themselves, as will exempt them from troubles, for a trial of their fidelity): but in this they ought to think themselves happy, that they know the Lord will put an end to them when he hath sufficiently proved them.

Ver. 20. *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*] And while they lie under them, he sustains, upholds, and defends them: so that they receive not the least hurt by any of those sufferings, which otherwise would crush them in pieces.

Ver. 21. *Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*] Whereas the wicked, who for the present flourish, shall at last be seized by some calamity or other; which shall stick to them, till it hath destroyed them: they that spitefully persecute the righteous bring such a guilt upon themselves, that they shall not escape without their justly-deserved punishment.

Ver. 22. *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*] And by that very means the Lord ofttimes rescues his faithful servants from those mischiefs which their enemies intended to them; and, you may be sure, will not suffer any of them, since they rely entirely upon him, to perish, like those ungodly wretches.

PSALM XXXV.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, we are sufficiently informed by the matter of it, was penned by David, when he was fiercely persecuted by Saul. Whose forces, which were unjustly raised against him, he beseeches the Lord to dissipate; and especially to stop the mouth of his false accusers (such as Doeg and the Ziphites), of whom he most heavily complains, in the middle of the Psalm: vowing to God that he should be ever mindful of the benefit, and never cease to give him thanks and praise for his loving-kindness, if he would be pleased to confound them, and deliver him.

There may seem to be here, as in other Psalms, such horrid imprecations against his enemies, as do not become the mouth of a good man. But they must be considered as an appeal to God in a particular case; for justice against those whom no court on earth could or would punish: which made it fit, he thought, to desire the Divine Majesty to execute the judgment he had enacted in his law against obstinate and incurable offenders, who else would escape the hand of justice; whereby, also, others would be hardened in their wickedness.

Besides, the words may be interpreted, not as a prayer, but as a prediction; and rendered, not *let them be*, but *they shall be*, &c.

Ver. 1. *PLEAD my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*] Take my part, O Lord, and maintain my cause against those that contend with me, and have raised a war against me: for I am not able to defend myself, and have none else to appear for me.

Ver. 2. *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*] Be thou my protector, and preserve me under the shield of thy almighty providence! oppose thyself unto them, and keep off all the assaults of my enemies.

Ver. 3. *Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*] Strike through them, as well as defend me; let them run upon the spear and the sword, if they continue to pursue me: and confirm my soul in this belief, that thou wilt at last deliver me from this persecution.

Ver. 4. *Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.*] Disappoint them [*or*, they shall be disappointed] of their hope, which they have to destroy me; and make them blush to see all their warlike preparation against me come to nothing: let them all be put to flight, and make a confused retreat with shame and dishonour, who design my ruin.

Ver. 5. *Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.*] Let them be dispersed [*or*, they shall be dispersed, *and so of the rest*] as the chaff, when it is blown about by a mighty wind: and let the invisible powers, which thou usest as ministers of thy displeasure (especially when thy ministers on earth do not their duty), drive them forward, and thrust them on in that disorder.

Ver. 6. *Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.*] Let them not know where they are in their flight; but wander, as men in the dark, up and down in slippery and dangerous ways: and there let the ministers of thy vengeance still pursue them, and press them on with restless fears, till they tumble headlong into destruction.

Ver. 7. *For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.*] For though I have done them no wrong, nor given them any provocation, they hunt and pursue me as if I were some wild beast; and by treachery, as well as open force, endeavour to take away my life.

Ver. 8. *Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*] Let him, whose hatred hath armed so many against me, (and, when I suspected no danger, sought my ruin, 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11. 21. xix. 10.) meet with unexpected destruction: let him be caught in his own wiles; and, according to the rules of thy righteous judgment, suffer that himself which he thought to do to me.

Ver. 9. *And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation.*] Then shall my soul conceive the highest joy in the love the Lord bears to me, and in his care over me: to him will I give thanks as the author of my deliverance, and rejoice in what he hath done for me.

Ver. 10. *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy, from him that spoileth him?*] The joy shall spread all over me, and from the inmost sense of my heart, with all the power and strength I have, both of body and soul, I will burst forth in thy praise, and say, Lord, who is comparable to thee in mercy,

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and wisdom, and power? who rescuest the poor helpless man, in wonderful ways, from him whom he cannot resist; the man who is miserably in want, and hath none to relieve him, from him who by violence and oppression hath undone him.

Ver. 11. *False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*] For which they have no pretence at all, but what is founded on calumnies and lies, forged by men of no conscience, who have accused me of the highest crime, and laid to my charge such things as never entered into my mind, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.)

Ver. 12. *They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul.*] And (which adds to the sharpness of my persecution) they are men whom I have obliged; who are so detestably ungrateful, as, for all the good I did them when I was in power, to make me no other requital, but to endeavour to deprive me of my life.

Ver. 13. *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom.*] O how unlike is this to the kindness that I shewed to them in their troubles! when they were sick, for instance, I sympathized most heartily with them; and testified my unfeigned grief and sorrow for them, by putting on sackcloth; in which I humbled myself before God, with prayer and fasting, for their recovery: which I often repeated; and in such an affectionate manner poured out my soul to God on their behalf, in my most secret retirements, that I wish myself no better than I desired God to do for them.

Ver. 14. *I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*] I walked mournfully; and went to visit them with the same diligence as if I had been in danger to lose a friend or brother: I could not have looked more dejectedly if I had bewailed the death of the dearest mother.

Ver. 15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not.*] But these very men (such was their inhumanity) could not dissemble the joy they conceived, when the news was brought of any evil that befel me; but ran to tell one another, and assembled themselves together, that they might publicly testify how glad they were to hear it. The very scum of the people, who were so vile, that I did not so much as know there were such men in the world, met together, by their example, to revile me; and there was no end of their reproaches.

Ver. 16. *With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*] They joined themselves to the profane flatterers and trencher-buffoons; who maintaining themselves by saying any thing which they think will please their lords and masters, made me the subject of their abusive jests, ridiculous sayings, and scoffs, in their table-talk; which they accompanied with such rage, as if they could have eaten me up.

Ver. 17. *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destruction, my darling from the lions.*] Lord! thou seest all this, I know very well; but how long wilt thou bear with it, and be a spectator only? be pleased at length to vindicate my innocence, and deliver me (who am desolate, and have none to relieve me, but thee alone) from those that have already despoiled me of my goods and good name; and now seek, like so many rapacious lions, to devour me, and take away my life.

Ver. 18. *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.*] I will ever preserve a grateful remembrance of it, if thou wilt vouchsafe this mercy to me; it shall be acknowledged with the most hearty thanks before all thy people, as soon as thou shalt restore me to thy tabernacle; in the most frequent assemblies, when the whole nation meet at their solemn feasts, I will celebrate thy power and goodness with my praises.

Ver. 19. *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*] Let not those, therefore, that unjustly persecute me, have the pleasure of getting any advantage of me: let them no longer make signs one to another with their eyes and their heads, as if they had done their business, and should satisfy their causeless hatred of me.

Ver. 20. *For they speak not peace; but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*] For they are men of a turbulent spirit, that give not their sovereign peaceable counsel, but devise false stories, to incense him against those that would gladly serve God quietly under his government, without doing the least harm to any body.

Ver. 21. *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha! our eye hath seen it.*] Nor are they content to do this secretly; but now they bawl against me with open mouth, and boldly accuse me as a traitor, rejoicing at any colour they can meet withal for their calumnies; and saying, So, so, we have found him out; his treasonable practices are discovered; we ourselves are eye-witnesses of it.

Ver. 22. *This thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.*] But thou knowest me better than they, O Lord; to whom I appeal as a witness of the wrong they do me; beseeching thee to declare my innocence, by affording me thy help, and delivering me from their hands now that they hope to seize on me.

Ver. 23. *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*] Thou hast seemed hitherto to neglect me, though I have so often made my appeal to thee; but I beseech thee at length, O my God and my Lord, who art the only judge that can give me relief, the only sovereign that can protect an injured subject, to take cognizance of my cause; and pass sentence on me according to my doings.

Ver. 24. *Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.*] I desire only that thou wilt do me right; and not that thou shouldest, in favour of me, forbear to condemn and punish me, if I be guilty of what they accuse me. Deal with me according to thy unspotted justice, O Lord (whom the fear of none can overawe) my God, who art a judge whom none can corrupt; and then I know they shall never have the better of me.

Ver. 25. *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*] Prevent so great a mischief, O Lord, lest they should applaud themselves in their wickedness. Let them have no occasion to think within themselves they shall prevail; saying to their souls, So, now all goes well; cheer up, we shall have our desires: much less let them prevail so far,

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that they should triumph in my ruin, and say, We have obtained our end, we have utterly destroyed him.

Ver. 26. *Let them be ashamed, and brought to confusion together, that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.*] Let them all be shamefully disappointed; and, as they have combined together insolently to deride and mock me; so let them who rejoice at my present forlorn condition, look upon one another with amazement and confusion. Let them not only be put to the blush, but perfectly confounded, and never be able to lift up their heads again, who proudly traduce me, and seek to raise themselves upon my ruin.

Ver. 27. *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*] And thereby fill all their hearts with joy, and their mouths with the voice of triumph, who, believing my innocence, have wished well to me: and let them see me so victorious, that this may be their perpetual song; The Lord be extolled with the highest praises, who favoured his servant David so much, that he delivered him out of all his troubles, and settled him in peace and prosperity.

Ver. 28. *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.*] As for my tongue, that sure shall never rest; but be declaring thy justice, and goodness, and fidelity to me: on which I shall ever think; and be giving thee the praise which is due unto them perpetually.

PSALM XXXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the Servant of the Lord.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, composed by David, and delivered by him to the chief master of music in the tabernacle, seems to have been penned, as the former and many others were, during the persecution he suffered from Saul. It is hard to say, to what part of that time it peculiarly belongs. The most probable opinion is, that it hath respect to the beginning of it: when Saul had a jealousy of him, and a hatred to him; but hid it secretly in his heart, and counterfeited friendship to him, and desire of his alliance; (as you read 1 Sam. xviii.) and yet could not carry the matter so cunningly, and so wholly suppress and conceal his intentions to destroy him, but that they broke out in some fits; (as you find there, ver. 11. and in the next chapter, ver. 10.) and by the very preferment he gave him, made it plainly appear he designed his ruin. This treachery David here describes (without naming Saul, to whom he preserved a due reverence); and opposes thereunto the fidelity and goodness of God, who rules the whole world, and takes care of beasts as well as men; and therefore would not, he hoped, desert him, nor any else that depend on him, and are his faithful servants; as he, in a special manner, professed himself, and was obliged to be.

Ver. 1. *THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*] The wicked may use many arts to disguise and cloak his evil intentions; but his actions, directly contrary to all the laws of humanity, as well as the law of God, discover what he is, and make me resolve not to trust him; because, without all doubt, he hath no regard to God, nor will be restrained by the fear of him from doing me still more mischief.

Ver. 2. *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*] Though he flatter and soothe up himself in his own conceit, imagining he carries things so cunningly and smoothly, that none can accuse him; yet at length his iniquity shall be found out, and make him odious to all the world.

Ver. 3. *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*] When he pretends great kindness to me, and professes I am dear to him, his meaning is to do me mischief, and to cheat and ensnare me into danger. He was once a better man, and better affected towards me; but now his passions have so blinded his judgment, and perverted his will, that he knows not what belongs to justice and equity, much less to goodness and charity.

Ver. 4. *He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.*] For whatsoever he may say in public of his affection to me, when he is retired he is contriving how to ruin me. He muses of nothing else when he lies down to sleep, and when he awakes: and is not transported merely by a sudden fit of jealousy and anger against me; but hath set himself (with an obstinate resolution to persist in it) in a course so void of all piety, justice, or charity, that there is no wickedness, though never so abominable, at which he sticks, to compass his design to destroy me.

Ver. 5. *Thy mercy (O Lord) is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*] My comfort is, that his hatred and falsehood cannot be so great, but thy goodness and loving-kindness, O Lord, and thy faithfulness to thy word, are infinitely greater: on these I rely, which I know will not deceive me; being no less conspicuous and constant (as well as unmeasurable) than the heavens.

Ver. 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.*] Thy justice, also, in the administrations of all affairs, appears as visibly, and is as unmoveable, as the highest mountains; which the greatest power on earth cannot shake, nor make to bend to their inclinations. The deepest plots they can lay are shallow, and easily disappointed by thee; whose orders and decrees shall be executed and brought to pass, by ways and means that we cannot fathom: and therefore I will trust in thee, O Lord; whose careful providence extends not only to men, but to beasts also, which have no sense of thee.

Ver. 7. *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*] For if thou hast such care of their well-being, O God; thy loving-kindness, sure, and tender mercy, are incomparably greater to those that know thee, and depend upon thee. It is impossible to express the value of them; and to know how rich, how safe, and secure, they are, who, in all troubles and dangers, can confide in thee for thy powerful protection.

Ver. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness*

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of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.] They shall not only be well contented in that condition wherein they are; but have abundant satisfaction in thy love to them; and, at length, bring thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for thy merciful preservation of them, and feast with thee in thy house; where thou shalt pour into them the sweetest joys, and give them an earnest of the greatest plenty of all Divine blessings, that shall continually flow in upon them.

Ver. 9. *For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*] For thou art the spring from whence all our happiness comes, which thou art able to communicate for ever: and if thou wilt be favourable to us, nothing shall hinder our joy; but we shall think ourselves happy in the most disconsolate condition.

Ver. 10. *O continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*] Vouchsafe then, O most gracious God, to extend thy loving-kindness (which is so precious, that it excels all worldly things) not only unto me, but unto all that obediently acknowledge their dependance on thee: never withdraw thy favour from them, but perform thy promises to thy faithful servants, and defend them from all the mischievous devices of their enemies to destroy them.

Ver. 11. *Let not the foot of pride come against me; and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*] Make me an example of it; and, whatsoever is secretly designed and plotted against me, let not my proud enemy prevail, and tread me under his feet; let not all the power of the wicked, that may join with him, be able to subvert me.

Ver. 12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*] In this attempt I am confident they shall fail; I plainly see them baffled in this wicked design. It is as certain, as if I already beheld it with mine eyes, that where they thought to overthrow me, they shall fall themselves: with so powerful a hand shall they be thrown down, that they shall never recover themselves, to renew their attempts against me any more.

PSALM XXXVII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm (which is composed so artificially, that the order of the letters of the alphabet is observed, in the first letter of every other verse) David seems to intend to prevent the scandal which some might take when they saw the wicked in prosperity, and the godly under affliction (as they did sometimes); quite contrary to the law, which promised all good things to those that kept it, and threatened all evil to those that broke it. He bids them be patient, and stay awhile; and they should see both verified. For the prosperity of the wicked shall be short (as he over and over again bids them consider): and the just, if they would but wait awhile, should see themselves not only delivered out of trouble, but made very flourishing. And therefore he advises, in the first place, that no man by any means suffer himself to be tempted, by the splendid condition of the wicked, to imitate them in their ungodly courses; but to stick close to the principles of piety and virtue, trusting in God, and committing himself to him; who will give great satisfaction to such honest men, in what they have at present, though never so little; and, at last, put them in possession of all that their hearts can desire. And, to preserve themselves in this pious temper, he shews nothing could be more available than meekness and humility (which procure us, as Theodoret here notes, abundance of good things), and to reflect on the lamentable end of the proud and haughty, who take unjust courses (as was apparent in what befel Saul and Absalom, and such-like persons). Which sufficiently admonishes all men to bear their present troubles decently and well: and not to envy the prosperous successes of the wicked, nor to call them blessed: but rather account them unhappy and miserable.

The son of Sirach seems to have summed up this Psalm in those few words, (Ecclus. i. 23, &c.) "A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and faith and meekness are his delight."

Ver. 1. *FRET not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*] Let it not vex thee to see the evil-doers in great prosperity: nor be provoked thereby either to accuse God's providence, or to think the worse of virtue; or to imitate them in their wickedness; or to wish thyself to be what they are.

Ver. 2. *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*] For this prosperity, which thou art apt to look upon with admiration, envy, or anger, is so far from lasting always, that it is but of short continuance: they shall be cut down on a sudden, as the grass is by the hand of the mower, when it is most flourishing; or they shall fade away as the green herb doth, which in a little time withers, and of itself falls to decay.

Ver. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*] If you would have a firm and stable happiness, confide in God (and not in riches, shouldest thou have them in the greatest abundance), doing all the good thou art able in that condition wherein his providence hath placed thee: so shalt thou be settled in the good land God hath given us (when the wicked are cut off from it), and shalt enjoy securely all those blessings which he, according to his faithful promise, will provide for thee.

Ver. 4. *Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*] Be not discouraged, therefore, nor too much dejected, if thou art for the present afflicted; but rest contented with what thou hast: or rather solace thyself in the Lord, and take a greater delight in his promises, than the wicked can do in their present possessions; and, commending thyself unto him by constant prayer, be confident he will answer thee, according to thy heart's desire.

Ver. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*] When thou hast any difficult business in hand, and art doubtful of the success; or when thou knowest not what course to take, for the accomplishing of thy honest designs; leave all to the Lord, and trust to him in pious and upright courses, that he will direct and assist thee, and bring things to a good issue.

Ver. 6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the*

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light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.] And if thou shouldest be accused as a man of evil designs; let not that trouble thee neither: for though thy fame may be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds; yet, as that scatters them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noon-day.

Ver. 7. *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*] And in the mean time rest satisfied in this, that the Lord knows thy innocency: and do not murmur and complain if he do not presently vindicate it: but think it becomes thee to wait upon him, with humble submission to his will, and to stay as long as he pleases. And be sure thou beest not so impatient, as to be irritated, by the thriving wickedness of the ungodly, and the strange success they have in their dishonest contrivances, to do as they do; and to follow them in their calumnies, fraud, injustice, and oppression, or any such-like courses, whereby they craftily compass all their designs.

Ver. 8. *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in anywise to do evil.*] If thou perceive thy indignation begin to arise, to see such vile people so successful, suppress it presently; let it not vex and afflict thee, much less boil up to wrath and furious displeasure; or if on a sudden, thou art surprised with such a passion, take care, however, that it proceed no farther; and by no means be so incensed (I must repeat that caution, it is so weighty) as to follow their example in evil-doing.

Ver. 9. *For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.*] For how prosperous soever it may prove in the beginning, the end, assure thyself, shall be lamentable. And let those evil-doers expect also to meet with an untimely end, and to be cut off by the hand of justice, in a remarkable manner, from the land of the living: when they that follow my advice, and wait patiently till the Lord will do them right, shall possess those good things that he hath promised, in this land which he hath given them for their inheritance.

Ver. 10. *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*] And do not think he stays too long before he doth it; but if that thought come into thy mind, resolve to expect yet awhile longer; and still believe that, after a very short time, the wicked, who seem to stand so fast, shall be utterly destroyed. When thou hast made a strict search after him, thou shalt find nothing of him remaining in the place where thou sawest him so flourishing.

Ver. 11. *But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*] Whereas they that meekly submit to their present afflictions, and patiently wait upon God till he be pleased to relieve them, shall be settled at last in their possessions; and lead a most pleasant life, in the greatest plenty of all manner of good things: in the enjoyment of which nothing shall disturb them.

Ver. 12. *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*] The wicked, indeed, hope to hinder this; being so furiously enraged at the just, that he is always contriving some mischief against him.

Ver. 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming.*] But all his plots and crafty devices are ridiculous in the eyes of the Lord, who sees the day of his ruin approaching: which will inevitably seize on him, before his designs can take effect.

Ver. 14. *The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.*] He hath numerous partakers, indeed, who have added open force to their secret practices, and armed themselves in a warlike manner, for the just man's utter destruction; which they hope may be the more easily compassed, because he is destitute of human help, and will not take any crooked ways for his own preservation.

Ver. 15. *Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.*] But all these endeavours also shall prove in vain; and, which is more, they shall not only miss their aim, but their sword, as we say, shall cut their own throat; and the evil they intended against the just, shall fall upon themselves.

Ver. 16. *A little that the righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*] And as there is more satisfaction in the little pittance a righteous man hath, than in all the abundance which the greatest potentates have gotten by extortion, oppression, and violence: so that small power he hath shall be of more force to protect and preserve him, than all the multitudes which attend upon those violent men to guard them.

Ver. 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*] For the Lord is against the wicked; and be their power never so great, which they have to oppress and destroy the righteous, he will break it in pieces; but good men will he support, be they never so weak; and both maintain them in what they enjoy, and increase their stock, notwithstanding all that their enemies can do against them.

Ver. 18. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.*] He may seem to neglect them; but there is no day passes wherein he doth not take care of them, and exercise a most gracious providence over them; observing not only all their afflictions, but their patience under them, which shall be rewarded with the blessings he hath promised to them, and to their children after them.

Ver. 19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*] In calamitous times, when God punishes the world by war or pestilence, they shall not be ashamed of the hope they have placed in God, that he will preserve them; when a famine comes and pinches others, they shall be sure to have enough.

Ver. 20. *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*] But the wicked shall perish in those evil days; for the Lord looks upon them as his enemies; who, when they grow rich and great, are but fatted up as beasts for the slaughter, and on a sudden melt away, as fast as the fat of lambs that is burnt upon the altar: just so shall the Divine vengeance seize on them, when they are in the fulness of their prosperity; and, like that fat, they shall vanish into smoke, and come to nothing.

Ver. 21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*] You see a man now, perhaps, grow rich by wicked arts; but he shall in

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time be reduced to such straits as shall put him to double shame; first of borrowing, and then of not being able to pay at his day: when the righteous shall be so far from borrowing of any, that he shall be able to lend; nay, to exercise mercy, and give freely to him that needeth.

Ver. 22. *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*] For upon these God hath entailed a blessing by his gracious promises (which shall certainly be fulfilled), that they and theirs shall enjoy the good things of the land; and against the other he hath denounced a curse (which they shall no ways avoid), that they shall be rooted out.

Ver. 23. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way.*] Let a man but take care that his ways be pleasing to the Lord, by doing what he approves; and he will prosper him in all his undertakings, and guide his counsels and actions so, that he shall meet with good success.

Ver. 24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*] Or if he fail sometime of his end, he shall not be undone: the Lord still supports him by his power, that he be not discouraged; and relieves him by his good providence, that he be not utterly ruined.

Ver. 25. *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*] I say nothing but what I can confirm by my own long observation: when I was young, I began to take notice of it; and I continued so to do, till now that I am grown old: and I cannot remember, that in all my life I ever saw a truly pious, just, and charitable man, left destitute of necessary things; or his children after him reduced to such poverty, that they were constrained to beg from door to door.

Ver. 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*] No, he rather hath not only enough to supply his own wants, but to spare also for the relief of others; to whom he freely gives, or at least lends: and is so unwearied in these acts of charity, that God rewards it with blessings upon his posterity.

Ver. 27. *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*] Take my advice, therefore, if thou wouldest be happy: never do any evil, though it be to gain the greatest advantage this world can afford; but constantly employ thyself in good works, especially in acts of mercy: though thereby thou mayest seem to impoverish thyself for the present; be assured, this is the way to live a long and prosperous life in great tranquillity and peace.

Ver. 28. *For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*] For the Lord loveth that which is just and right; and upon that account will not forsake those that are merciful, but be very merciful to them; and continue his mercy to their children after them, when the posterity of injurious and hard-hearted men shall be destroyed.

Ver. 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*] Such wretches may flourish for a time: but they that shall be settled and fixed in the land of promise, and leave it as an inheritance to those that succeed them, are only (as I have often said) the godly, just, and merciful men.

Ver. 30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*] Who do good not only to men's bodies, but to their souls also; imparting to them (especially to their own children) such precepts of virtuous wisdom, as teach them how to behave themselves aright in every action of their life, and naturally tend to make them prosperous.

Ver. 31. *The law of his God is in his heart: none of his steps shall slide.*] As appears by this righteous man himself: who, making the law of God (which he hath continually before his eyes) the rule of his life, proceeds steadily to the obtaining of his end; and happily finishes his course, without falling into those mischiefs, into which wickedness leads those who have no regard unto that rule.

Ver. 32. *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*] His greatest danger is from such lawless men, who (as I have said before) watch for an opportunity, and leave no means unattempted (though it be by falseness and treachery), not only to give him trouble and disturbance, but to take away his life.

Ver. 33. *The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*] But the Lord will not let them have power to do what they design. He will rescue him from their violence. Or, if they seek to undo him in a form of law, by false accusations before the public judges, he will find a means to clear his innocence, and reverse even the sentence they have pronounced against him.

Ver. 34. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*] Therefore, if I should study never so long, I can give a good man no better advice than I did at first: hope in God (when any of these troubles happen) and patiently wait for his mercy, in a steadfast observance of all his commands. Be not moved by any mischiefs that men can threaten, to go out of that way into which thou art directed by God's law; but believe that he will at last, if thou perseverest in it, advance thee to the possession of all the blessings it promiseth; and thou shalt see those that thought to depress thee utterly destroyed.

Ver. 35. *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spread himself like a green bay-tree.*] There wants not public examples of this in our own days. For I myself have seen the wicked (such as Saul, Doeg, and Ahithophel) in such power, that he was in no fear that any body could hurt him; but quite contrary, struck terror into all: his offspring was numerous, his possessions large, his revenue exceeding great; being like a tree never yet transplanted, that hath taken root, and sucked abundance of the earth, and spreads juice out of its branches every way.

Ver. 36. *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*] And yet, as firm as he seemed to stand, he was gone on a sudden; he vanished (it is very wonderful) just as you see a cloud pass away and disappear. I looked about me to see what was become of him, and whether he might not be removed (as a tree sometimes is) to another place; but there was no such man, nor any remainder of him to be found.

Ver. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*] Do you mark then and make it your own observation, as I have made it mine, and you will find there is this great difference between him that makes the laws of God the rule of his life, and those that

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transgress them; that though the former may meet with some troubles for a time, yet, if they do not make him forsake his integrity, nor in any thing swerve from his duty, he shall in the issue be very prosperous and happy.

Ver. 38. *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.*] But the other shall be utterly destroyed; none of them shall escape by any of their cunning tricks and devices, but shall all alike perish; though for the present they may thrive in their wickedness, yet in the conclusion they shall be cut off both root and branch.

Ver. 39. *But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble.*] For the Lord, whom none can resist, undertakes to be the defender, deliverer, and benefactor of just and good men: they may safely depend on him for power and strength to support and protect them, whensoever they fall into any distress,

Ver. 40. *And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*] He will not fail to help them during their troubles, and at last to deliver them out of them: the wicked shall not be able to hinder it; but he will deliver them from all their secret plots, or open attempts to destroy them: he will therefore deliver them, because they entirely rely on him for safety, and will not take any other course but such as he allows, to save themselves from danger.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, to bring to Remembrance.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was composed by David, either during his affliction, to desire God graciously to remember him (as the title of it is), and send him deliverance, or afterward, to put himself in remembrance of the moans he made when he was in that sad condition; and how earnest he then was with God, to pardon all the sins which had brought him into it, and to release him out of it; and what hope and confidence he then had in God, which might encourage him and all others to place the like humble trust in his goodness for the time to come.

What the affliction was, is not so certain as it may seem at first sight. It is generally thought he was sick, and that of some noisome, ulcerous disease; as, in the beginning of the Psalm, several expressions, if they be taken literally, plainly enough denote. But he presently falling into a doleful complaint of the malignity of his enemies, and the coldness of his friends' affection towards him; it is thought not improbable by others, that he describes the crazy condition he was in (under the persecution of Saul) by the languishment of a sick man under some dangerous disease. And thus Theodoret understands it: only he supposes that he reflects upon the disastrous things that befel him after he came to the crown; by the murder of his son Amnon, the rebellion of Absalom, the falseness of Ahithophel, the abusive reproaches of Shimei, and all the other afflictions, mentioned in his history, which were sent by God upon him for the cure of his sins. And this sense we must follow; or else say, he was at the very same time sick of a grievous disease, when he laboured under one of those persecutions. And since the Psalm will be of larger use, if we so interpret it, I shall follow that conjecture. So I call it, because we do not read of any sickness David had; nor are we certain what the particular sins were which he bewails in so sad a manner, that it hath made this be called one of the *penitential Psalms*, beginning just as the first of them doth, Psalm vi.

Ver. 1. *O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*] O Lord, I am sorely afflicted; and it is but just I should be so. Yet let me prevail with thee for so much mercy, as not to proceed to any farther severity: or if thou dost, yet still to mitigate it with some favour, that I may not suffer in the utmost extremity.

Ver. 2. *For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*] For (beside the trouble which my enemies give me without) the pains I already endure in my body are exceeding sharp, and touch me to the very quick: thou hast inflicted on me a heavy punishment, which presses me down to the ground.

Ver. 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*] There is no part of my body but feels the sad effects of thy displeasure, which my sins have so provoked, that I am in perpetual pain, without any intermission.

Ver. 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*] They have brought a great number of evils upon me, which like a deluge have overwhelmed me; and lie upon me as an intolerable burden, under which I am ready to sink, unless thou support me.

Ver. 5. *My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness.*] I am full of ulcers, and they are full of putrefied matter, which grows noisome and offensive to me; as a just reward of my folly, whereby, to satisfy my unreasonable desires, I have inconsiderately offended thee, (2 Sam. xi. 2—4.)

Ver. 6. *I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly: I go mourning all the day long.*] I am not able to go upright, being grown crooked beyond measure: the posture of a mourner, who goes, or rather creeps, softly, and bowed down, is mine continually.

Ver. 7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh.*] Fiery biles break out in the parts about my loins: and though there be so many of them, that one would think all the ill humours were run thither; yet, in the rest of my body, as I said before, there is no part but is out of order.

Ver. 8. *I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*] I am exceedingly weak, and worn away with pain and grief; wherewith my heart is so perpetually tormented, that I roar, rather than sigh, and groan and cry under the apparent anguish of it.

Ver. 9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*] But why do I complain in this manner, and make such a particular enumeration of my sufferings? thou, Lord, understandest what I want, and what I would have: though I should say never a word, all my miseries, and the sighs they have cost me, are not unknown to thee.

Ver. 10. *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*] Thou seest

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the great agitation of my mind, which wanders up and down in restless thought, but all to no purpose; for my strength hath forsaken me: the light of my eyes is so weak, that I can scarce make any use of them.

Ver. 11. *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*] And if I could, I should see none of those whom one would expect, in such a condition, to come and comfort me, (2 Sam. xv. 31.) For I am deserted by those who professed great love to me: yea, they with whom I contracted a friendship and intimate familiarity neglect me; and such whom nature hath inclined to pity and relieve me keep at a distance, and give me no assistance in my affliction.

Ver. 12. *They also that seek after my life lay snares for me; and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.*] Meanwhile my enemies are very busy, and employ all their subtilty to find a way how to make an end of this miserable life of mine: they discourse of nothing else but what mischief they may do me; and what they cannot do by force, they are continually contriving how to compass by fraud and deceit.

Ver. 13. *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*] I wanted not information how they calumniated me; but was so oppressed with the weight of my other afflictions, and of those sins which have brought them upon me, that I took no notice of it: but lay as if I were deaf, and heard not what they said; or dumb, and could not make an answer.

Ver. 14. *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*] I was as silent, I say, as if I knew nothing of their false accusations; or as if I were not able to confute them.

Ver. 15. *For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.*] For, notwithstanding all my sins, and thy sore displeasure which I feel against them, I have a good hope in thee, O Lord, that thou wilt plead my cause. I leave them therefore to thee, O Lord, who art the righteous judge; and as thou hast in justice afflicted me, so wilt thou, I doubt not, make them know that they have wrongfully charged me.

Ver. 16. *For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.*] I still conclude with myself, that, as bad as I am, and as low as thou hast laid me, thou wilt not think fit to let them insult over me, and brag that they have got the better of me:

Ver. 17. *For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.*] As they are in danger now to do; for I am so weak every way, that I am ready to fall, and have nothing but a sad prospect of ruin before mine eyes.

Ver. 18. *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*] I know, and do confess, that I have deserved it by my iniquity; which when I consider (and nothing else), I have reason to fear the worst that they can do unto me.

Ver. 19. *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong; and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*] And what cannot they do, who, while I lie in this weak and miserable condition, are flourishing and prosperous, strong and mighty? and, by false rumours, make me still more odious to the multitude, and increase their forces against me.

Ver. 20. *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.*] With which are joined even those whom I have highly obliged; who do not think it bad enough not to be my friends, but are become my adversaries: for no other reason, that I can find, but because I make a conscience of what I do, and faithfully study, and earnestly seek, the good of all this kingdom.

Ver. 21. *Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me.*] I humbly therefore betake myself to thee, O Lord, beseeching thee, that thou wilt not desert me as they have done. O my God, who hast been very gracious to me on sundry occasions, and seest that I still depend entirely upon thee, let not my sins make thee to abandon me.

Ver. 22. *Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.*] But rather let my misery, and the imminent danger I am in, move thee speedily to relieve me. Defer no longer, O Lord, whose property it is to deliver those who have none to help them, and trust in thee alone, as I now do, for safety and preservation.

PSALM XXXIX.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

It is thought by some, that this Psalm (which David delivered afterward to Jeduthun, an excellent musician, and governor of the music in the tabernacle, 1 Chron. xxv.) was made upon the same occasion with the foregoing. And so in part it was; for though there is little reason to think that he was still sick when he composed it (as they imagine); yet his enemies, it is manifest, pressed him sorely. And the consideration of the flourishing condition wherein they were, though very wicked (whilst he, a pious servant of God, was lamentably afflicted), put him into some commotion, notwithstanding his resolution to the contrary; till the thoughts of the shortness of man's life, and consequently of his sufferings, and how easy it was for God to cut off his enemies, composed his spirit again, and made him patient and contented with his present condition.

So that this Psalm seems to me to be rather of the same kind with the thirty-seventh than the thirty-eighth. Only there David gives counsel to others, after God had delivered him from many persecutions, to be patient by his example: but here he himself puts that counsel in practice (perhaps, when the rebellion of Absalom renewed his trouble, which is the opinion of Theodoret); though he shews it is very difficult, on some occasions, not to be very much disturbed at wicked men's prosperity, and good men's afflictions, especially when it comes to be a man's own case under some grievous calamity.

Ver. 1. *I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*] It is a very great provocation to anger and discontent to see the wicked still continue prosperous, and to hear how they abuse and calumniate me. But I resolved with myself not to be vexed at it; but rather to take care, as I have exhorted others, (Psal. xxxvii.) to be more inoffensive in all my actions; and especially to watch over my tongue, and to lay the strictest restraint upon it, that no indecent complaint, no irreverent discourse about God's providence, no, nor any intemperate speeches

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against my adversaries, should proceed out of my mouth, (2 Sam. xvi. 8. 13.)

Ver. 2. *I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*] And this purpose I kept for some time so steadfastly, that I spake not a word, either good or bad, but remained, like a dumb man, in perfect silence; being so afraid of breaking out into impatient language against my unjust accusers, that I would not so much as vindicate myself, and clear my innocence. Though the truth is, while I thus denied all vent to my inward grief (which I could not quite suppress), it was the more increased.

Ver. 3. *My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.*] For though I *said* nothing, yet I could not choose but have many sad *thoughts* of the injuries I suffered; and musing long upon them, and upon the impunity of those who committed them, my sorrow grew so great at last, that it could no longer be pent up; but, burning like a fire, with vehement heat in my breast, it broke forth into such expressions as these:

Ver. 4. *Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*] Lord, I do not murmur nor repine at my sufferings; but that I may be able to bear them still patiently, make me sensible, I humbly beseech thee, how short this frail life is, and how soon it will have an end; that, duly considering this, I may be the less concerned about the miseries I endure, which will end together with it.

Ver. 5. *Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.*] And it is strange I should forget it, seeing it is so apparent thou hast circumscribed my days within a very narrow compass, and that, compared with thy eternal duration, they are just nothing. Besides, there is no man so strong, so firm, but he may die in an instant (as my enemies may do), in the height of his prosperity, and most flourishing condition: for be he never so settled as he thinks in his greatness, it is certain he is mere emptiness and vanity.

Ver. 6. *Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*] What an imaginary thing then is the life of man! who promises himself mighty matters, but hath no more than the image and shadow of them in his brain; for on a sudden he himself vanishes, and is gone: yet for these he makes a lamentable bustle and stir, whereby, if he get any thing, alas! it is to very small purpose; for after all the pains he hath taken to heap up wealth, he hath no certainty whether he shall live to enjoy it; no, nor whether his son, or his kindred (for perhaps a stranger, nay, his enemy), shall possess it.

Ver. 7. *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*] And therefore I am resolved, O Lord, with thy gracious assistance, not to trouble myself so much as I have done about these vain and uncertain things: for what is there even in a kingdom, that I should desire and expect it impatiently, which may so soon be lost again? I have done with all these empty hopes, and content myself with this alone; that thou wilt not forsake me, but be my gracious God, and choose what is best for me.

Ver. 8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.*] And, first, I hope thou wilt forgive me all those sins, which have justly deserved these heavy punishments; and then shew me so much favour, that wicked men, who are so foolish, that they understand not thy meaning in these afflictions which have befallen me, but imagine thou hast cast me off, may not make me their laughing-stock, nor mock at my reliance on thee, and patient submission to thee.

Ver. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*] For I did not complain, but silently endure their insolent and scurrilous language, together with all my other sufferings; reverencing thy justice, by whom every thing is ordered: (2 Sam. xvi. 10.) and this they interpreted to be yielding the cause, and justifying their proceedings against me.

Ver. 10. *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.*] May it please thee, therefore, who hath inflicted sore judgments on me, at length to remove them: put a speedy end to them (if thou intendest to confute their foolish reproaches); because I cannot long subsist under such a burden, as hath already taken away all my strength from me.

Ver. 11. *When thou with rebukes doth correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.*] And, indeed, who is able to contend with thee, if thou wilt not graciously remit the punishment we deserve? For when thou chastisest man (in any of those ways whereby thou hast threatened to rebuke his extravagance), his wealth, his power, and whatsoever else he hath that is valuable, moulders away like a garment that is moth-eaten: and it is no wonder; for the greatest of men, as well as the meanest, are but mere vanity.

Ver. 12. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*] But let even this move thee, O Lord, to grant my petition, which I make for pardon and release from this chastisement. Because I am so frail (as all my forefathers were), and our time here is so very short, that I am more like a stranger and sojourner in this country, than an inhabitant or lord of it (as I lately thought myself); therefore grant my earnest request: and when I say nothing, but silently submit to thy correction, let my tears speak for me, and prevail with thee for some mercy.

Ver. 13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*] Forbear me, I beseech thee, and do not proceed thus to afflict me: but repair the decays that are in my strength, and let the very few days I have to live be more peaceable; that, free from the disturbance my enemies give me, I may do thee some small service before I leave the world, and have nothing to do in it any more.

PSALM XL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm of David, directed to the chief master of music, for the use of the tabernacle. Wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him in delivering him from some great danger: (it is not certain what: but may be applied either to the distress he was reduced into by his enemies, as we read in the Psalm foregoing; or to

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the sickness God had inflicted on him; or to both, mentioned Psal. xxxviii.) and then declares his resolution to serve God faithfully and cheerfully, in such words as may be better applied to Christ's readiness to do the will of God, though it were by dying for us.

But it seems this deliverance was not so complete, but that still he was infested with many enemies; and therefore, in the latter part of this Psalm, he commends himself still to God's merciful providence: beseeching him to finish what he had begun, by continuing to be his deliverer.

Ver. 1. *I WAITED patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*] It is good, I see, to persevere in prayer, and with constancy and patience to wait upon the Lord; for though he hath made me expect very long, yet at last he hath been graciously pleased to condescend unto me, and to grant my desire.

Ver. 2. *He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*] For when I was in the greatest distress, and no more able to help myself than a man who is fallen into a very deep pit, where he sticks fast also in the stiffest clay; he not only delivered me from that present danger, which was very dreadful; but brought me into a place of safety, and withal confirmed me in it, that I might not fall again into the like extremity:

Ver. 3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*] But have liberty in quiet and peace to meditate his praises, and to indite a new song in honour of our God; who hath, to all other benefits, added this late wonderful preservation: which shall excite many others, when they duly consider it, to join together with me in his worship and service; and patiently to depend upon him, and hope in his mercy, as I have done.

Ver. 4. *Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust; and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*] And happy is that man, notwithstanding all the troubles he may endure, who reposes his confidence in the Lord alone: and neither envies the success of insolent and deceitful men; nor is tempted thereby to imitate them in their pride, and in their perfidiousness.

Ver. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*] Many are the benefits, O mighty Lord, and my most gracious God, which thou hast bestowed upon such faithful servants; for whom thou hast done wonders, and still designest great and many kindnesses, which cannot be comprehended, much less expressed, by our weakness. Whensoever I attempt to make thee some acknowledgment for such inestimable favours, I find it is beyond my power so much as to tell the number of them.

Ver. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.*] There are no peace-offerings (whereby we are wont to testify our thankfulness for thy mercies), nor any oblations, which attend upon them that are worthy to be presented unto thee; or are a fit expression of our gratitude for so many, and so great, benefits as I have received from thee. A ready and constant obedience to thee, in thy faithful service, is far more acceptable; to which, as I am by nature tied, and thou hast by thy mercies strongly engaged me, so I do freely consent, and cheerfully devote myself (as the Lord Christ hereafter will do entirely): if I should add all other kinds of sacrifice, whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, I see of how little value they are with thee.

Ver. 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.*] And therefore, when I thought what thou mightest justly expect from me, after this great deliverance, immediately I said (as if I had heard thee calling upon me, to do thee some extraordinary service), Behold, I come to make an offering of myself unto thee (as the Lord Christ will do, even of his very blood). For so the book of the law requires (wherein this sacrifice of Christ is more plainly described):

Ver. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.*] That I should do what is pleasing and acceptable to thee, O my God (as the Lord Christ will do more perfectly), though it be never so difficult and troublesome to me: and so I will most gladly, with all my soul: for there thy law is written, and not only in my book. (Deut. xvii. 18, 19.)

Ver. 9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.*] And as an earnest of it, I have already proclaimed to all thy people, in their full assemblies, what great obligations I have unto thee: behold, O Lord, I appeal to thee, who canst not be deceived how forward I have been to offer to thee, on all occasions, this public sacrifice of praise, for all thy benefits bestowed upon me.

Ver. 10. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*] I have not thought it sufficient to meditate alone by myself upon thy loving-kindness, which hath mightily affected my heart; but I have made known to others how faithfully thou hast performed thy promises in the wonderful deliverance thou hast lately given me: this singular kindness and fidelity I have openly published to all thy people, in their most frequent assemblies, at the solemn festivals.

Ver. 11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*] Be thou pleased, O mighty Lord, as readily, openly, and abundantly, to express thy tender mercy towards me: let that loving-kindness and faithfulness, which I have so much magnified, be ever seen in my continued preservation and deliverance from all future dangers.

Ver. 12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me.*] For I am not yet so completely happy, but that I see mine enemies are so busy in contriving more mischief against me, that dangers without number surround me. And indeed my sins are so many, that it is but just I should feel the fruit of them in multiplied punishments; which have suddenly seized on me, and grown to such a number, that, as I may sooner tell how many hairs I have on my head, than how many troubles I suffer, so I am ready to faint under the burden of them:

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Ver. 13. *Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.*] Till I think of thee, O Lord, who, I hope, wilt be still pleased to deliver me; yea, thou hast been so very good to me, that I take the humble boldness to beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver me speedily.

Ver. 14. *Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward, and put to shame, that wish me evil.*] Let them all be alike most shamefully disappointed, that restlessly endeavour to take away my life: defeat them, and put them to flight, with open disgrace, whoever they be that study to do me any mischief.

Ver. 15. *Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame, that say unto me, Aha, aha!*] Let utter desolation be the recompence of all their shameful deeds, whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame: when they insulted over me, and made a mock both of my affliction and of my trust in thee.

Ver. 16. *Let all those that seek after thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.*] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek for safety by no other means but those which thou allowest, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly: let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people, never cease to say, The Lord be praised: let the glory of his wonderful works be every where published and extolled.

Ver. 17. *But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*] As for myself, this is my never-failing comfort, that though I am stripped of all, and quite destitute of human help, yet the Lord takes care of me, and consults my good: and it is sufficient, that thou Lord art my God, on whom I depend for relief and deliverance; O delay not to send it to me.

PSALM XLI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

Though some will have this Psalm to have been composed by David, and delivered to the chief master of music, only upon occasion of that great strait, into which he was brought by the rebellion of his son Absalom; yet it is the more common opinion, and seems more probable, that he had been also lately very sick. And then finding, by sad experience, what an aggravation it was of his affliction, to see his enemies so barbarous as to rejoice at it, and wish his death; nay, his friends, especially some one particular friend (who was a type of the traitor Judas), not only to take no pity on him, but prove false and perfidious to him; he, in the first place, highly commends and blesses that temper of mind which inclines men to be pitiful and compassionate to those that are sick, and assures such persons that they shall feel the happy fruits of it; and then complains most heavily of their inhumanity, who insulted over him in his calamity, and with reproachful words and vile calumnies exasperated the grief of his mind. On which he hoped God, who loves merciful men, would take compassion, and put him into a condition to chastise their insolence.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*] Happy is that tender-hearted man, who, prudently considering it may be his own condition, doth not despise, but visit the sick, especially such as are poor, and takes care to comfort and relieve them. The Lord will requite his kindness, and send him the like succour and relief when he falls into any danger.

Ver. 2. *The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*] In sickly times, or other public calamity, the Lord will preserve his life; and more than that, will make him live in prosperity upon the earth; which when the envy and hatred of his enemies endeavour to destroy, the Lord will disappoint them, and not suffer them to have their will on him.

Ver. 3. *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*] Or if any sickness (as no man can expect always to be in health) bring him into such a languishing condition, that he cannot help himself, the Lord will support him, and give him patience: then thou wilt remarkably requite his officious care about the sick (whose bed he was wont to turn and smooth for his softer repose), by giving him ease and refreshment during his weakness, till thou change it again into health and strength.

Ver. 4. *I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.*] In confidence of this, I myself, when I was sick, addressed my prayer unto the Lord, and implored his mercy, saying, Take pity upon me, (who have not been negligent in this duty, Psal. xxxv. 13, 14.) and do not deal in strict justice with me; but, though I have been a grievous offender, and so deserved a heavier stroke, graciously pardon all that I have done amiss, and restore me again to my former health.

Ver. 5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me; When shall he die, and his name perish?*] I am the fitter object of thy compassion, because my enemies have none at all; but, to the affliction which thou hast laid upon me, add their defamations, and imprecate more evils to befal me: for nothing will satisfy them but my death; which they impatiently long to see, and hope to bury my reputation together with me.

Ver. 6. *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*] If any of them, indeed, come to see me, he seems to be sorry for me, and condoles with me; but there is nothing but fraud and deceit under these fair words, which he bestows upon me: for all the time that he either counsels or comforts me, or makes any promises of what he will do for me, he is hatching some mischief in his heart against me, from what he can gather out of my words, or actions, or disease; and as soon as he is out of my doors, he spreads it abroad among his companions, to increase their hatred, or their contempt of me:

Ver. 7. *All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.*] Which discovers itself in their private assemblies, where they secretly confer together how to undo me: they have no other business there, but to contrive what use they shall make of his information for my ruin.

Ver. 8. *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him:*

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and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.] This is the time, say they: for now God hath met with him, and punished his heinous sins with a grievous disease; which sticks as fast to him as our reports (which the people believe, and he will never be able to confute), and hath laid him so low, that he cannot possibly recover.

Ver. 9. *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*] And, which is still more afflictive, the man with whom I never had any quarrel, but rather used as a friend; he in whom I reposed the greatest confidence, (2 Sam. xvi. 23.) who was one of my family, and was maintained by my service, hath, in a brutish manner, not only forsaken me, but (like a horse that kicks at him that feeds him) contemptuously lifted up himself against me.

Ver. 10. *But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.*] But all this doth not discourage me when I think of thy mercy, O Lord; which as I most humbly implore, so thou art wont to shew to those that are merciful. I am not so low, (ver. 8.) but, contrary to their expectation, thou art able to raise me up, and restore me to my throne, from whence they have driven me; and then I shall punish them, according as my office and their wickedness require.

Ver. 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*] And truly I take this to be an argument of thy kind intentions towards me, that hitherto thou hast marvellously preserved me, both in this sickness and in all other dangers; so that my enemy hath missed the triumph he hoped for in my ruin.

Ver. 12. *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and setteth me before thy face for ever.*] The triumph belongs to me, who thankfully acknowledge that thou hast supported me, and defended my innocence: thou hast taken such a special care of me, that I hope I shall serve thee all my days, without interruption, in that office thou hast committed to me.

Ver. 13. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and amen.*] For which and all other his benefits, let the great Lord of all the world, the God of Israel, whom he hath chosen for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised; let him be blessed throughout all generations, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity: let him be blessed; let him be blessed (again and again I repeat it with most fervent affection); and let all his people concur with me in these desires, and with one consent accompany me with their joyful acclamations, saying, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.

PART II.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician. Maschil. For the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins the second of the five books of Psalms, according to the Hebrew division. All those of the former book, except four, have the name of David prefixed to them, as the author of them; and so were put together, by him that collected them, into one volume. But in this second book, the first part of it consists of Psalms entitled *to the sons of Korah;* as several learned men understand the inscriptions; who imagine that some holy men among them composed these Psalms, in the time of the captivity. But I shall follow our English translation, and take this Psalm (as the LXX. and the Vulgar Latin do) to be directed to the sons of Korah, to be set or sung by them, under the chief master of music in the tabernacle. And then there is little question to be made, but David indited this, and some of the Psalms which have this title; as it is certain he did most, if not all, of those that are contained in the latter part of this second book, from Psalm the fiftieth to the end of the seventy-second. And this present Psalm, with that which follows, seems to have been penned, either when he was under the persecution of Saul, or (which is more probable) when he was driven again from the house of God by Absalom. Which sad condition he bewails; with a great mixture of grief for his banishment from those sweet enjoyments he had there, and of hope to be restored to them again.

This Psalm is the second of those thirteen which are called *Maschil;* (see Psal. xxxii.) by some here taken to be an epithet of the master of music, who taught or instructed the sons of Korah very skilfully.

Ver. 1. *AS the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*] The hunted deer doth not long more earnestly, and cry more loudly, for the brooks of water to quench her thirst, than my soul doth for the happy enjoyment of thee, my God, in the public solemnities; from whence I am driven by those that seek my life.

Ver. 2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*] It is not my throne of which I am so desirous, as the place where thou my God dwellest; who art the eternal spring of life and comfort, which no other God can communicate. O how vehemently doth my soul long for thee; and how tedious doth the time of my banishment from thee seem! O when shall I see that happy day, wherein I shall be restored to the liberty again of presenting myself before thee in thy tabernacle?

Ver. 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*] There I was wont with great delight to feast with thee; but now my appetite fails me to my daily food: instead of which, my only satisfaction is in tears; to which I have wholly abandoned myself. For what can be more grievous than to hear them say, I am abandoned by thee? (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8.) and to be continually reproached and derided with this taunting question, What is become of thy God, of whose favour thou wast wont to boast?

Ver. 4. *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.*] O what a sad thought is it, to call to mind those pleasant days which are past and gone! particularly when I brought the ark to thy dwelling-place, with the joyful shout of all thy people; who in

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a pompous manner accompanied me with their praises and thanksgivings at that festival solemnity. (1 Chron. xv. 25. 28.) It even breaks my heart with grief to remember this thing, and all the other sacred times, when before this banishment we met together at thy house, to worship and acknowledge thee for all thy benefits.

Ver. 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*] And why may I not expect the like again? It is true, my soul, these are very sad and melancholy reflections; but must I therefore be utterly dejected? Is there any cause that anxiety of mind should make thee so tumultuous, as if all hopes of this felicity were lost for ever? Trust in God, and patiently wait upon him; for the time will come when I shall go to his house, and praise him still for his favour towards me; in delivering me from this as well as all my former afflictions.

Ver. 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*] O my most gracious God, thou seest how I chide myself for it; and yet I am overcome with grief, and should be quite oppressed, while I am forced to hide myself in this wilderness beyond Jordan, (2 Sam. xvii. 22. 29.) and wander up and down in these solitary mountains, far distant from thy tabernacle, did I not comfort myself with the thoughts of thy goodness and power; whom I have served there.

Ver. 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*] I am fallen into a bottomless depth of miseries; which follow one upon another, as if the former invited the next to succeed it: they gush in upon me by thy appointment with such violence, as spouts of water do out of a cloud. I am tossed like one upon a tempestuous sea, where the waves rage and swell so high, that every billow threatens to overwhelm and bury me in the deep.

Ver. 8. *Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*] Yet I do not distrust the loving-kindness of the Lord, by whose authority this tempest shall be appeased. He will in much mercy order and dispose things so, that night and day I shall have perpetual cause to sing his praise: and therefore I will commend myself to him continually, who is the author of my life, and beseech him to preserve it.

Ver. 9. *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*] I will take the boldness also to expostulate with him, saying, O God, I have always made thee my refuge; and thought myself safer under thy protection, than if I had been in the strongest fortress: why then dost thou delay thy help, as if thou tookest no farther care of me? why do I still continue in that mournful condition wherein I left Jerusalem, (2 Sam. xv. 30.) and have no relief from this grievous oppression of the enemy?

Ver. 10. *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*] O how cutting are their reproaches! how deeply do they wound my soul! It is like a stab to the very heart, to hear them say, in their daily jeers, What is become of thy God, in whom thou trustedst? why doth he make no more haste to send thee deliverance?

Ver. 11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*] But it better becomes me to expostulate with myself, than with thy majesty. And therefore I ask myself again; O my soul, why art thou thus sadly afflicted? why do these things so miserably torment thee, and disturb thy quiet? since there is hope in God, that I am not utterly banished from his presence; but shall return to his house again to praise him: on whom I fix my eyes as my only saviour (for hitherto he hath been my most gracious God), who will pull off my mourning apparel; and make joy and gladness take place of sorrow and sadness in my countenance.

PSALM XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, in all probability, was composed by the same author with the former (and accordingly the LXX. expressly ascribe it to David); and upon the same occasion, when he was driven by Absalom (who drew the whole kingdom into his conspiracy, 2 Sam. xv. 10. 13, &c.) from the house of God, which he loved more than his own palace. Thither, therefore, he desires to be restored, and expresses his hope of it, in the very same words that he did in the Psalm foregoing.

Ver. 1. *JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*] O God, the supreme judge of the whole world, I appeal to thee, in this contest between me and a seditious people; who, void of piety and humanity, are risen up in rebellion against me: beseeching thee to vindicate my innocence, and defend me from their violence. O deliver me from that deceitful man, who pretended devotion, when he went to make an insurrection; (2 Sam. xv. 7. 10.) deliver me from the crafty counsel which Ahithophel gives him; and from the open force, whereby he seeks injuriously to take away my life, (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 2. *For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*] For I have none to flee unto for safety and protection, but thee alone; who hast ever hitherto been my mighty deliverer, and art now my only support: and therefore I hope thou wilt make haste to help me; because it puts me into the sorest agonies to see myself for the present so deserted by thee, that I can do nothing but bewail the forlorn condition and the miserable straits into which the enemy hath reduced me. (See Psal. xlii. 9.)

Ver. 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*] I am beset with mighty armies, and have nothing to oppose to them but thy favour and thy faithfulness: O send forth the blessed effects of them, and, according to thy promises to those that depend on thee, let thy almighty power, in much mercy, lead and conduct me: let it go along with me, and give me the victory over them; and bring me back again unto thy holy mountain, where thou hast fixed thy dwelling-place.

Ver. 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God*

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my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.] Then will I faithfully perform my promises unto thee; and the first thing I do, shall be to go to thy altar, with sacrifices of thanksgiving to thee, the author of my joy and triumph: which shall not cease with that public service; but when I am alone, entertaining myself with my harp, I will praise thy mercy, and faithfulness, and power, O God, my righteous judge; who graciously protectest the innocent, and defendest those that cannot right themselves.

Ver. 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*] I doubt not of it; and therefore be no longer dejected, O my soul: why shouldest thou give thyself any farther disquiet, and trouble thyself with tumultuous thoughts? Hope in God to see better days; and believe the enemy hath not so blocked up the way to his tabernacle, but God will open it again, and give me liberty to go and sing praises there unto him; from whom alone as I expect deliverance, so he (who hath always been my most gracious God) will turn my mourning into joy, and let my countenance be dejected no more.

PSALM XLIV.

To the chief Musician, for the Sons of Korah. Maschil.

ARGUMENT.

This is the third of those Psalms called *Maschil*, (see Psal. xxxii.) and the second of those directed to the sons of Korah, (see Psal. xlii.) but doth not seem to have been composed by David, as the two foregoing were: for in his days they were not oppressed by foreign enemies, as the Psalmist here complains, in the name of the whole church, they were to such a degree, that some of them were made slaves, others killed, and all of them became a reproach. Yet I do not think it was composed in the captivity of Babylon (much less in the persecution by Antiochus, as Theodoret thinks, when these inspirations were ceased), but before that time, though long after David's days, while their kingdom was as yet standing, and they had some forces remaining, though God did not bless them with success, (ver. 9.)

And if we will fix upon any particular time, and not content ourselves to know, in general, that it was penned when the whole nation was in great distress, I can find none so likely as the days of Hezekiah, who was a pious reformer of that church, and had restored the Divine service, according to the law of Moses, and the ordinances of David; (2 Chron. xxix. 3, 4. 12. 25.) and taken care the priests and Levites should not only do their duty, but have their tithes paid them punctually, &c. (2 Chron. xxx. xxxi.) and yet, notwithstanding, was invaded by the king of Assyria. Who did not merely make some inroads upon them, and carry away a great many people, (as had been done before his time, 2 Chron. xxix. 9.) but took all the fenced cities, and came before Jerusalem with a great army, (2 Kings xviii. 13. 17. Isa. xxxvi. 1.) In this strait, that good king (or some other Divine person, 2 Chron. xxix. 25.) indited this Psalm; wherein he remembers what God had done for their ancestors; and, considering he was still their king, thought they might have hoped for the like victories, of which they could not but still boast and glory. But alas! it fell out quite contrary; for when they expected his help, he delivered them up into their enemies' hands, and that when they were the true worshippers of him, and for his sake were slain all the day long. The consideration of which, he hoped, would move God at length to take compassion upon them, and arise for their deliverance.

This is the best account I can give of this Psalm, which I shall follow in my Paraphrase. And we need not scruple to think there were psalmodists in Hezekiah's days; for after that we find this gift remained with the prophets. For instance, it is visible in Habakkuk; who composed a prayer after the manner of David's Psalms, as we read in the last chapter of his prophecy: where there are several words, which are to be met withal no where but in the book of Psalms; such as *Sigionoth*, *Selah*, and *Niginoth*.

Ver. 1. *WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*] We have been certainly informed, O Lord, by our fathers, and we believe what they have told us, not only concerning the wonderful works thou didst in their times, but in the ages long before them; as our ancestors that lived in those days have recorded.

Ver. 2. *How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*] How thou didst by thy power expel the seven nations out of the land of Canaan, and settle in their stead thy people Israel, whom thou didst transplant thither from among the Egyptians; upon whom thou inflictedst the sorest plagues, till they were forced themselves to thrust them out, (Exod. vi. 1. xii. 33.)

Ver. 3. *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*] This is to be ascribed to thee alone, and not to their strength and valour: such a speedy conquest was not gained by the force of arms, but by thy mighty power and glorious presence; which thou wast pleased to afford them; not because they had obliged thee by their meritorious services (for they were a murmuring and refractory people), but merely out of thy love and good-will towards them.

Ver. 4. *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.*] And thou, O God, who didst such astonishing things for them, art still the very same almighty being; whom I honour as my sovereign, my governor, and protector; and humbly beseech thee that thou wilt now in this sore distress vouchsafe to deliver (for, alas! it is not in my power, though thou canst as easily as speak a word deliver) the posterity of those, for whom thou hadst so great a favour.

Ver. 5. *Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*] If thou wouldest but appear for us, the most powerful enemies should not be able to stand before us: but (as thy servant Moses foretold, Deut. xxxiii. 17. O fulfil that gracious promise!) we should overthrow and trample under foot all that oppose us.

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Ver. 6. *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*] It is thou alone must do it, as thou didst for our forefathers, when thou broughtest them into Canaan: for I have not the least confidence (as they slander me, 2 Kings xviii. 20.) in my arms; no hope to be delivered from this dreadful invasion by any forces that I can raise:

Ver. 7. *But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.*] But by thee, O Lord, of whose goodness we ourselves, as well as those before us, have had experience; for thou hast often rescued us from our enemies, and shamefully disappointed those, whose hatred armed them against us.

Ver. 8. *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.*] In this we glory, and make our boast continually, that we have such a King, such a mighty Saviour and Deliverer, who hath wrought wonderful things for us, and for our forefathers: this is our only comfort and security, which gives us hope that we shall praise thee for relieving us in this distress, and that all posterity shall praise thy power and goodness.

Ver. 9. *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.*] But for the present thou art so far from being our defender, that thou hast exposed us to the will of our enemies: the shame which was wont to fall on them (ver. 7.) is now our portion; and thou hast withdrawn that gracious presence, (ver. 3.) wherewith thou wast wont to conduct and accompany our armies.

Ver. 10. *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*] We have lost the courage wherewith thou didst formerly inspire us, and cannot defend our cities and fortresses: but, instead of pushing down our enemies, (ver. 5.) are forced to flee before them, and shamefully leave our camp to be a spoil to them that hate us.

Ver. 11. *Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.*] And some of us they kill in the pursuit without any mercy, like sheep appointed for the shambles: others they carry captive, and disperse them among strange people: (2 Chron. xxix. 9.)

Ver. 12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*] Where being disowned by thee, they are become so contemptible, that they are sold as the vilest slaves, who are nothing worth: thou hast parted with them very easily, and their lords look upon them as unprofitable wretches; by whose sale they do not enrich themselves, but only seek to be rid of a useless burden.

Ver. 13. *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*] This hath made us that remain to be so cheap in the eyes of all our neighbours, who do not only despise, but reproach and vilify us; for we are grown ridiculous to them that are round about us, and they make a scoff of us.

Ver. 14. *Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.*] Thou hast brought upon us the curse pronounced by thy servant Moses, (Deut. xxviii. 37.) for we are become a by-word among the heathen; who, when they would express the wretchedness of any person, say, he is viler or more miserable than a Jew; and when they say nothing they signify, by the scornful motion of their heads, their contempt and derision of us.

Ver. 15. *My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.*] I cannot open my eyes but the tokens of our disgrace present themselves before me; which hath made me so ashamed, that, to hide it, I do not willingly shew my face.

Ver. 16. *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*] For I can hear nothing neither but reproachful words against us, and blasphemous words against thee: (2 Kings xix. 3. 23.) from that insolent enemy, whose very countenance is full of disdain and scorn, and threatens farther mischief to us.

Ver. 17. *All this is come upon us: yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*] This great heap of calamities is fallen upon us, and certainly we have deserved them all: though this comfort is still remaining, that we are not so wicked as to be moved by all this to desert thee, and violate that covenant whereby we are engaged to worship thee alone.

Ver. 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.*] We adhere still to thy religion, though both it and we be thus vilified and persecuted: (2 Kings xviii. 22.) we have such a hearty affection to it, that we have not hitherto proved apostates from it:

Ver. 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*] No, though thou hast so shattered and broken in pieces all our forces, that we are in the most dismal and forlorn condition; little short of utter destruction.

Ver. 20. *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god.*] Thou knowest the truth of this: for if there have been so much as a design in our hearts to revolt from thee; or we have made prayers when we spread out our hands towards heaven unto any other god, whose worshippers we saw so prosperous;

Ver. 21. *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*] How is it possible for us to conceal it from thee? or how should we escape thy vengeance for it, who art privy to the most secret motions that are in our souls?

Ver. 22. *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*] And that which thou seest in secret, our sufferings testify openly to all others: for our constancy to thee exposes us to continual slaughters; we prefer a shameful death before prosperous impiety; and, rather than sacrifice to any other god, choose to fall ourselves a sacrifice to thee.

Ver. 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.*] And therefore we hope at last thou wilt take notice of our fidelity; and no longer seem to neglect those that have not deserted thee. Give us leave, O God, to beg this of thee most earnestly, and to ask why thou dost not send relief to thy afflicted servants. Make no farther delay; but, though for our sins we have been exposed to the cruel contempt of our enemies, (ver. 9.) own us now at length for thy people: and shew that we are not such abjects as they account us.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*] It is very grievous to us to think that they look upon us as deserted by thee; which

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provokes us to expostulate with thee, and to demand (in an humble manner) wherefore is it that thou givest us no countenance; nor expressest the least regard to our intolerable affliction, wherewith we are oppressed?

Ver. 25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*] For the load of it is so great, that it hath sunk us into the most dejected condition: wherein we lie dismayed, as men without life and soul, having no strength at all to help ourselves.

Ver. 26. *Arise for our help, and redeem us, for thy mercies' sake.*] Therefore do thou appear for our deliverance, now that we can neither do any thing for ourselves, nor deserve any thing of thee: let not thy goodness, which hath been so famed, suffer together with us; but, for the sake of that, which we and our fathers have so often experimented, rescue us from our miseries.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the Sons of Korah. Maschil. A Song of Loves.

ARGUMENT.

The foregoing Psalm is not more sad and mournful, than this (as Theodoret observes) is joyful and comfortable: promising the most glorious things to them. The author of it is not named: but it was delivered, as the former, to the master of music, for the use of God's service in the tabernacle; to be sung upon *Shoshannim* (by which we may understand all those instruments that had six strings) by the sons of Korah, to the known tune of *Maschil*, (see Psal. xxxii.) And being a *Song of Loves*, as the title tells us, (alluding plainly to the name of Jedidiah, given to Solomon by Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. xii. 25.) most interpreters conclude it was composed upon the occasion, at least, of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter: who, it is most probable, was a proselyte to the Jewish religion.

Some few, indeed, will not allow so much as this, that there is any respect to Solomon at all in this Psalm, but only to Christ. And the truth is, many of the expressions in it are so magnificent, that they can but in a very poor and low sense be applied to Solomon and his bride: and some of them scarce at all. Though, on the contrary side, other expressions seem so plainly to belong to him, that they can no other way, but by allegory, be applied to our Saviour. Therefore I believe that I ought not wholly to omit all respect to Solomon and his marriage in my Paraphrase; though principally I shall direct the Psalm to Christ. It being so apparent, that no Christian can deny it, that the mind of the prophet, while he was writing some part of this Psalm, was carried quite beyond king Solomon, to the great King, the Lord Christ. Or, at least, he was guided to use words so high, that they proved too big for Solomon: and we must say, as our Saviour doth in another case, *Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.* And so the best of the Jewish interpreters acknowledge.

Ver. 1. *MY heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*] My heart is full of a festival song, which I have meditated, and am ready to utter in praise of king Solomon; who is but a shadow of that great King which we expect: in honour of whom chiefly I will recite what I have composed, with such fluency, as shall equal the style of the most skilful writer.

Ver. 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*] Thou, O King, art lovely above all other persons, thy speech is most acceptable and persuasive; because the Lord loves thee, (2 Sam. xii. 24.) and hath therefore promised long blessings to thee; which yet do but faintly represent the truly eternal blessings, which he hath bestowed on that great King, who when he comes it shall be said that he is in favour with God as well as man; (Luke ii. *ult.*) and speaks as never man spake, (John vii. 46.) so that all wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth, (Luke iv. 22.)

Ver. 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*] Put on thy royal ornaments, and the ensigns of thy power, O most mighty prince; and appear like thyself in such splendour and majesty, as may serve for an emblem of that most illustrious power and sovereign authority, wherein the omnipotent Lord of all the world shall shew himself among men.

Ver. 4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*] And may thy kingdom so prosper every way, in the planting all virtue among thy subjects, and terrifying thy enemies; that it may prove a lively type of the happy government of the Lord Christ: whose kingdom shall prevail over all, when he goes forth like a great conqueror, (Rev. xix. 11.) not to enslave men's persons, or to spoil them of their goods, but to settle the true faith among them, to make them humble and meek, just and charitable: and for the furtherance of this glorious work, thy mighty power, O Lord, shall instruct thee to do miraculous and amazing things, (Luke iv. 36. v. 26.)

Ver. 5. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.*] Which shall make thy word pierce, like sharp arrows, into the hearts of all those that oppose thy royal authority; and make the nations of the earth (far more than shall obey king Solomon, though he should reign over many kingdoms, 1 Kings iv. 21.) humble themselves, and become subject to thee.

Ver. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*] O great Lord, the God of king Solomon, and of all those that are called gods in heaven or earth; the judge of the whole world: how weak and tottering are the thrones of all other princes in comparison with thine, which shall never be subverted? It is the glory of king Solomon, that God hath promised his kingdom shall continue many ages: (2 Sam. vii. 13.) but thou shalt reign for ever and ever; and of thy kingdom there shall be no end: (Luke i. 33.) thy laws are so just and so good, thy government so equal and fit, that they shall be subject to no alteration.

Ver. 7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*] For thou thyself also immutably lovest all righteousness and goodness, (from which other princes may swerve, and so bring their kingdoms to ruin, 1 Kings ix. 4—6.) and perfectly hatest all impiety and wickedness: for which cause, God the Father hath

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highly exalted thee, O God, above all others whom he calls his sons; and conferred on thee such supereminent gifts, as make a joy among thy subjects far exceeding that, by whose sound the very earth was rent, when Solomon was anointed king, and preferred above all his brethren, (1 Kings i. 39, 40.)

Ver. 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*] That, indeed, was a joyful day; and so is this, wherein thou didst appear with great gladness in thy wedding garments, brought out of the stately wardrobes: the odour of which is so fragrant, as if they were made of the richest perfumes among us; and yet nothing so grateful as the knowledge of Christ, which shall be spread as a sweet odour in every place, when he goes to espouse a church unto himself, (2 Cor. ii. 14—16.)

Ver. 9. *Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*] Thou wast most honourably attended by many princely virgins, the daughters of kings (though far inferior in their descent to the true disciples of Christ, who are all born of God), and next to thyself was placed the royal bride, in a vesture of the purest gold; as an image of the church of Christ, which shall sit with him in heavenly places, (Eph. ii. 6.) having the glory of God upon her, (Rev. xxi. 9. 11.)

Ver. 10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*] O royal bride, understand and consider seriously the happiness to which thou art advanced, by being married to such a prince: and never think more of the religion of thy country in which thou wast born and bred; but become a true proselyte, and consent to the law of God: (as we ourselves and all the world must do to Christ, when he calls us to incline our ears to his heavenly doctrine; and not only renounce all our former rites, but father and mother, and all things else that are dearest to us, for his sake, Luke xix. 26. Eph. v. 31, 32.)

Ver. 11. *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.*] So shalt thou be most beautiful and amiable in the eyes of the King thy husband, (as Christ by that means shall present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27.) who is now become thy Lord: and therefore see thou beest subject unto him, (as the church must be to Christ; whom God will highly exalt, that at his name every knee shall be bound to bow, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord, Phil. ii. 9, 10.)

Ver. 12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.*] The people of Tyre, as rich and as proud as they are, shall come, with their neighbouring countries, and bring thee presents; the most powerful among them shall make suit unto thee for thy friendship, (as the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and their honour into the church, Rev. xxi. 24.)

Ver. 13. *The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.*] For king Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of our prince, is no less adorned with all excellent qualities of mind, than her body is with rich attire; wherein she now appears in a splendid manner, (as the ornaments of those that are born of God in the Christian church, shall not be so much the outward adorning of wearing of gold, as the hidden man of the heart, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.)

Ver. 14. *She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*] She shall be brought home unto the king with magnificent pomp, in embroidered raiment; and the virgins, her maids of honour, that attend upon her, shall come along with her, (as the church being owned by Christ for his spouse in a solemn manner, and being pure and holy, Rev. xix. 7, 8. there shall be many chaste virgins among us, who shall make a part of it, and follow Christ whithersoever he goes, Rev. xiv. 1. 4.)

Ver. 15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace.*] They shall express their inward gladness by all the outward tokens of joy, as they go along in that pomp; and so shall enter into the royal palace, (a figure of the church, into which men shall enter with far greater joy, and say, Hallelujah, let us rejoice and be glad, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Rev. xix. 6, 7. Acts ii. 46.)

Ver. 16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*] And may this be the happy fruit of this marriage, that instead of thy royal ancestors in Egypt, whom thou hast forsaken, thou mayest be the mother of children, whom thou mayest make rulers in all the countries which are subject to king Solomon, (2 Kings iv. 21. 24.) As, instead of the patriarchs, of our descent from whom we are apt to boast, shall be the twelve apostles and their successors, sitting upon thrones, and judging the twelve tribes of Israel, (Matt. xix. 28.) by whose means the church shall bring forth children unto Christ, whom he shall make kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign upon the earth, (Rev. v. 10.)

Ver. 17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*] By this very song I will make thy name to be mentioned with honour throughout all ages, who shall learn from hence to give thee thy deserved praises as long as the world shall last; and, much more, to propagate the Christian name (prophesied of so long before) to the latest posterity, and celebrate their worth with perpetual praises, who forsook all to follow Christ, and rather chose to lose their life, than quit his service, (Jam. v. 11. Μακαρίσομεν, *We call them blessed*, &c.)

PSALM XLVI.

To the chief Musician, for the Sons of Korah. A Song upon Alamoth.

ARGUMENT.

It is not known to what time this Psalm belongs (about which there are several conjectures), nor who was the author of it. I shall suppose it to have been made by David, or some of the sons of Korah, after those great victories which he won over several nations, mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 10. For any one may see that it is a pious triumph in God, after some remarkable deliverance from very powerful enemies; and there are none we can find in the historical books to whom it can more probably relate, than to those there recorded. Of which great victories it was very fit there should be some thankful

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monument left to posterity, whereby they might be encouraged to hope in God, and not suffer themselves to be dismayed at the sight of the most numerous armies that might be gathered against them, if they adhered faithfully to their duty. And therefore this Psalm was delivered to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle upon *Alamoth;* of which mention is made, 1 Chron. xv. 20. and is thought to be either some tune then in common use, or some kind of musical instrument unknown to us, in which young virgins, as some fancy, took a peculiar delight, and were wont to learn to play upon it; which they make the reason and original of its name.

Ver. 1. *GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*] God is the most powerful protector, in whom we may safely confide: he inspires us with courage, and gives us strength to meet our enemies; we were in great danger, but found him exceeding ready to send us help, and give us a safe deliverance when we were sorely distressed.

Ver. 2. *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*] For which cause we will never hereafter be dismayed, but steadfastly hope in God in the midst of the greatest tumults and dangerous commotions: though we should see the most dreadful confusions (such as there are in an earthquake), and all things tumbled upside down, as if the earth and sea were blended together, we will still immoveably trust in him.

Ver. 3. *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*] Though the times should prove very tempestuous, and our enemies should storm like the troubled sea; though they should threaten utter destruction to us, and rush upon us with such a violence as its raging waves do (when it is swollen to the greatest height) against the shore; the mountainous cliffs shall sooner shake than we be disturbed.

Ver. 4. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*] Our hearts shall be quiet and still; like the river that runs through our city, from whence the inhabitants draw, by trenches, delightful streams to water their gardens. The small forces that guard this place, which make no more noise than those waters, (Isa. viii. 6. 7.) shall, by the help of the most high God, who in a special manner dwelleth here, be too hard for the greatest armies, which, in their number and their boasts, imitate the waves of the roaring sea.

Ver. 5. *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*] Let them not think to prevail against him, who, by a singular token of his presence, is in the midst of this city: other mountains may be shaken, but Mount Zion is immoveable; because God, when there is any danger, will send us seasonable and speedy relief against those that invade us.

Ver. 6. *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*] So we have lately seen, that when many nations combined against us, (2 Sam. x. 6.) they only shewed their rage and fury, but could not hurt us; for they were remarkably overthrown by the power of God, who declared himself against them, and utterly discomfited them; as he did the Philistines, sometimes by thunder and lightning from heaven, 1 Sam. vii. 10. (See Psal. xviii. 13, 14.)

Ver. 7. *The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*] Why then should we be afraid, since it is apparent the Lord, who commands all the armies of heaven as well as earth, is on our side? That God who preserved our forefather Jacob in all his distresses, and hath made a gracious covenant with his posterity, defends us as in an impregnable fortress, where we need never fear any danger.

Ver. 8. *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.*] Draw near all ye that doubt of it, and consider seriously the wonderful victories, which it had been impossible for us to win without the help of God: mark, I beseech you, how many cities we have taken, and what desolations we have made by his assistance in the enemies' country, who thought to have laid us waste, (2 Sam. viii. 1, 2. 1 Chron. xviii. 1.)

Ver. 9. *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder: he burneth the chariot in the fire.*] It is he that hath given us this peace, which we now enjoy, by disenabling all the people of Canaan, and the neighbouring nations, to make any wars upon us: he hath broken their bows, and cut their spears in pieces, and cast their chariots, wherein they trusted, into the fire, (2 Sam. vii. 4.)

Ver. 10. *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*] Shewing them as plainly by these glorious victories, how vain it is to oppose him, as if he had called unto them by a voice from heaven, saying; Lay down your arms, and no longer molest my people; know that I am the supreme governor of all the world, who have defeated all your designs, and destroyed your forces: and my power is not confined to one country, but shall be magnified every where as well as here, by confounding all those that will not desist from their hostile opposition to my will and pleasure.

Ver. 11. *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*] This is our comfort and support; in this we continue still to glory, and say as we did before, We will not fear the most potent enemies, since the Lord, who commands all the host of heaven and earth, is on our side: he preserved our forefather Jacob in all his distresses, and made a gracious covenant with him to be the God of his posterity; in him we are safe, as in an impregnable fortress, where no danger can approach us.

PSALM XLVII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is thought by some to have been composed by David (though his name be not in the title), when he translated the ark (which was the token of the Divine presence with them) either from Kirjath-jearim, with the most solemn pomp and all sorts of music, (2 Sam. vi. 5.) or from the house of Obed-Edom unto Mount Zion, (ver. 14, 15.) Others think it was composed by some of the sons of Korah, when the ark was again translated by Solomon, with the like rejoicing, (2 Chron. v. 2. 12, 13.) from Mount Zion to the house which he had built for it

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upon the neighbouring mountain. And there may be a third conjecture allowed, that it was made after some great victory which God had given them over their enemies; and sung as they followed the ark back to its dwelling-place, from whence it had been carried before them to the battle. There is no doubt but one or other of these triumphs gave occasion to it: and the ark being a figure of Christ, as that mountain was of the heavens, the translation or carrying back of the ark thither may be looked upon as a figure of Christ's ascension (after he had dwelt here awhile in a meaner place, and conquered death) unto the high and holy place, where he is now at God's right hand in the heavens. And with relation to this alone, the ancient fathers expound the Psalm; which may easily be applied, in the mystical sense, unto that business.

Ver. 1. *O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*] O be joyful all ye people, who are now assembled at this festival; let your hearts overflow with joy, and express how exceeding glad they are, by clapping your hands, and lifting up your voices, and shouting after a triumphant manner, in honour of the great God who dwells among us.

Ver. 2. *For the Lord most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*] For his majesty is most sublime, his dominion absolute, his power dreadful; being the sovereign Lord of the whole world, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords:

Ver. 3. *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*] By whom the people of these countries, though warlike and strong, were anciently subdued; and other nations since have been made our subjects.

Ver. 4. *He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah.*] He, who is the supreme disposer of all things, hath of his mere good-will chosen this good land to be our inheritance, and therein chosen a place for his own dwelling; which is an honour wherein we excel all other people, and a most singular token of his love towards us.

Ver. 5. *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*] God is gone up, by the special token of his presence, into that holy place, with shouts of joy and praise: the Lord is gone up in a triumphant pomp, with the sound of the trumpet, and all other instruments of music, (2 Sam. vi. 5. 15.)

Ver. 6. *Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.*] Let us never cease to sing his praises, who hath chosen us to be his people; let it be our constant employment to praise our King, who hath subdued the nations to us: O sing praises to him, sing praises to him; it cannot be too oft repeated, that he alone is to be praised.

Ver. 7. *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*] For our King is the sovereign of all the nations upon earth; sing ye praises therefore skilfully to his most excellent majesty: it is your wisdom to praise him in the best manner you are able, who alone is wise enough to govern all the world.

Ver. 8. *God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*] He hath made those heathens who dwelt in Zion to feel his power, and submit themselves unto him, (2 Sam. v. 7.) And there he hath seated himself upon the ark of his presence as on his holy throne.

Ver. 9. *The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.*] Before which the heads of the tribes, with all the people that worship him, who promised to give this country unto Abraham, are assembled together at their solemn feasts; without any fear of invasion from their foreign neighbours: for God (when to attend his service they have left their own houses unguarded) hath undertaken their protection, (Exod. xxxiv. 23. 25.) and he is infinitely superior to all other gods, which pretend to be defenders of the earth.

PSALM XLVIII.

A Song and Psalm for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seems to have been composed after the repulso of some army which invaded them, and intended to have destroyed Jerusalem. If all things else would agree, it might not unfitly be applied to the defeating of Sennacherib the king of Assyria's army, which actually begirt that city; but by a sudden pestilence, which in one night killed a vast number, was forced to quit the siege, and retreat with shame, (2 Kings xviii. 19.) But the fourth verse of this Psalm speaks of a combination of kings, who had joined their forces together upon this design: which makes it most applicable, in my judgment, to that history in 2 Chron. xx. where we read (ver. 1, 2. 10.) that Moab, and Ammon, and they of Mount Seir, came against Jehoshaphat, with an intention, I suppose, to fall upon Jerusalem. And though Jehoshaphat went out to oppose them, yet he acknowledges, (ver. 12.) their multitude was so great, that he had no power to resist them; but they might do what they pleased with him: for he knew not which way to turn himself, but only depended upon God: who in a marvellous manner dispersed them, as he told Jehoshaphat he would, without their striking one stroke against them. For which gracious message, sent him by a prophet, (ver. 14.) the Levites, and among others those descended from Korah, immediately praised the Lord beforehand, (ver. 19.) and after the victory gave solemn thanks, before they left the field, in the Valley of Blessing; (ver. 26.) and then returned to Jerusalem with psalters, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord, (ver. 28.) At which time, it is probable, this Psalm was sung, and called, a *Song and Psalm;* that is, a psalm of triumph, or of great joy; composed, perhaps, by some of the sons of Korah. But of a *Song and Psalm,* see Psalm lxvii.

Ver. 1. *GREAT is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*] Great is the majesty and the power of the Lord; who is therefore to be celebrated with the highest praises: and no where so much as in his own city, by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in that mountain which he hath long ago set apart for the place of his worship, and hath now so marvellously defended.

Ver. 2. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion; on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*] And a beautiful place it is which he hath chosen for

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his habitation, the very situation of Mount Zion being most delightful, the pleasantest in all the country, for it lies on the north side of Jerusalem, the city of the great King, the Lord of heaven and earth:

Ver. 3. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*] Who is the principal glory of that place, as that is of the country: for Mount Zion is not so beautiful for its situation, as for his Divine presence in that magnificent palace, which is built for him there; and makes that city an impregnable fortress.

Ver. 4. *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*] For, behold, a fresh instance of it; the kings of several neighbouring countries entered into confederacy to cast us out of our possession; (2 Chron. xx. 11.) and made a great progress in their design; marching together from beyond the Dead Sea, (ver. 2.) till they came nigh to Jerusalem, (ver. 16. 20. 24.)

Ver. 5. *They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*] But then they only had a sight of it, and that was all: for a sudden amazement seized on them, and such a panic fear, that they fell into confusion; and, taking one another for enemies, were destroyed by the ambush which one nation laid for the other, (2 Chron. xx. 22.)

Ver. 6. *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.*] There was nothing but terror and trembling to be seen throughout all the host: which surprised them so suddenly, and cast them into so great anguish, that it may be compared to the hasty and violent pangs of a travailing woman:

Ver. 7. *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*] Or to the consternation and confusion which the mariners are in, when a fleet of ships richly laden from Tarshish is broken in pieces, by the furious blasts of the east wind, one against another.

[*As a fleet of Jehoshaphat's was shortly after,* 2 Chron. xx. 37.]

Ver. 8. *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.*] We have heard of such things heretofore, which our fathers have reported to us; but now our eyes see the wonderful works of God, who told us by his prophet, that he would save us from this great army which invaded us, (2 Chron. xx. 14, 15, &c.) And we have seen his word verified in this city; from whence God, whose city it is, and who is the Lord of all the host of heaven and earth, sent invisible powers to terrify and disperse them; (ver. 22.) and will, we hope, defend and protect it from being subverted by the assaults of our enemies in future ages.

Ver. 9. *We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*] O God, we had no confidence in our fortifications, or in our army; but we assembled ourselves together in thy temple, to ask help of thee, (2 Chron. xx. 3—5.) and, meditating on thy wonted mercy to those that seek thee, we quietly expected what thy loving-kindness would do for us.

Ver. 10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.*] And as thou art called, O God, by the name of the Lord of hosts, so thou hast demonstrated thyself in the glorious victory thou hast given us, (2 Chron. xx. 15.) For which not we alone praise thee, but the most distant people, who hear the fame of it, shall acknowledge and magnify thy power, (ver. 29.) which thou hast abundantly declared in the just destruction of our enemies, and the gracious protection of us thy faithful servants.

Ver. 11. *Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.*] Let the inhabitants of Jerusalem then, which is the mother-city, give an example of joy and thankfulness to all the rest of the cities and towns of Judah: and let them unanimously join together with the greatest gladness, to express how sensible they are of thy power and goodness in this wonderful deliverance.

Ver. 12. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.*] Make a solemn procession, and go round about the city, blessing and praising God with thankful hearts; who hath preserved you from being begirt by the enemy: tell all the towers as you go along, and see if there be so much as one wanting, or the least hurt done to any of them.

Ver. 13. *Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*] Observe the outworks, and attentively consider them; take a distinct survey of all the sumptuous buildings also; and mark how entire they are, and untouched by the enemies' batteries, that you may keep a record of it, and preserve the memory of so great a wonder for the benefit of succeeding generations.

Ver. 14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.*] For this is the God who alone can protect us, and will be our defender, if we depend upon him, for ever and ever: he will not content himself with having preserved us once; but be our conductor, and exercise a most tender providence over us, as a shepherd doth over his sheep, all the days of our life.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

The author of this Psalm is not known; nor can we find whether there was any particular occasion of it. But whosoever composed it (whether some of the sons of Korah, or any other), it is likely that he had in his eye the unreasonable thirst of mankind after riches, and their insolence and haughtiness when they have acquired them; which, it is possible, was a great discouragement to some pious but poor people in those times; and, therefore, after the example of David, (Psal. xxxvii. xxxix.) he indited this Psalm to check that vanity, by setting death before their eyes. The serious meditation of which, he knew, would both pull down the plumes of the proud and scornful, and preserve those upon whom they trampled, from being dejected at their prosperous impiety.

Ver. 1. *HEAR this all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.*] Listen to me all ye people, in what part of the world soever you dwell; for that which I am going to deliver is of such common concernment, that it belongs to all countries, as much as any one, upon the face of the earth.

Ver. 2. *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*] Whether you be men of obscure birth, and meaner rank,

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or persons nobly descended, and in great authority; whether you abound in wealth, or are of a poor estate, you are all alike concerned to attend to my instruction.

Ver. 3. *My mouth shall speak of wisdom: and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*] Which is neither about trivial things, nor slightly considered, but about the most weighty matters, which my mind hath deeply pondered: I will enrich your souls with wisdom, which is better than all the worldly wealth you covet; and teach you how to direct all your actions aright unto that scope at which you aim of being happy.

Ver. 4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*] It is not vulgar instruction, but most excellent advice, which I have to give you; more to be desired than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles: to which I myself will diligently attend, while it is sung, as I play upon my harp.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*] I intend not to neglect the counsel I give to others; and therefore shall ask myself the question I mean to answer: What cause is there that I should be troubled with fears, and cares, and anxiety of mind, in calamitous times, when the iniquity of those that endeavour to supplant me hath surrounded me on all sides, and left me no way to escape them?

Ver. 6. *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*] They are confident their strength and power are such, that none can resist them; and the high conceit they have of their vast treasures makes them so proud, that they insult over others, and brag what they can do to ruin them.

Ver. 7. *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*] Alas! poor men, their weakness is apparent; there is not a man among them that, by all the power he hath, can find a means to save the dearest friend alive when God calls for him: he alone can dispose of men's lives; and the richest of them hath not wealth enough to purchase a reprieve, when he pronounces the sentence of death upon him.

Ver. 8. *(For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever).*] That is a business too difficult and costly for him, to redeem the life of a man; or to respite for a time his departure, whose soul is leaving his body: he must let that alone; for, as long as the world lasts, it will be a vain endeavour.

Ver. 9. *That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*] Let him attempt it, if he please, upon himself: can he prolong his own life, from time to time, so that it shall be perpetuated and never dissolved?

Ver. 10. *For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*] No such matter; the wisdom I speak of (ver. 3.) promises no exemption to the best of men, but they must die as well as others: and therefore those wicked sots, whose life differs little from that of beasts, may justly expect not merely to die, but to be destroyed and cut off like the beasts that perish. And then what becomes of all their wealth, which they are forced to leave to others; perhaps to strangers?

Ver. 11. *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.*] They imagined, indeed, and secretly pleased themselves in this fancy, that when they could stay no longer in the world, their goodly houses, which they had built, should stand for ever, and the places of their abode continue in their family from age to age: though they could not be immortal themselves, yet they hoped their names, which they imposed upon their lands, should never die.

Ver. 12. *Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*] But, alas! the thoughts of man are vain: for whatsoever esteem or reputation one of these worldlings gets here, it lasts not at all, but dies together with him; he is in this also like to his fellow-beasts, whom, when they are dead, nobody remembers.

Ver. 13. *This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.*] Thus their life concludes, as it was spent, in folly; (for they have no security that the names they impose on their lands shall last; or if they do, that men shall think of them; or if they should, what are they the better for it?) and yet, so close doth this folly stick to mankind, that they that succeed in their possessions make no benefit of this observation, but are as very fools as themselves, and tread in the steps of those that went before them.

Ver. 14. *Like sheep that are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*] They go in droves to their graves, when death seizes on them; thither it drives them in the close of their days, just as the shepherd doth his sheep to the fold in the evening: and then the just, over whom they insulted, shall quickly trample upon, and triumph over them (as they shall do much more when they awake out of the dust at the resurrection); all their power and splendour wherein they formerly appeared, though they seem as firm as a rock, shall moulder away; for the grave is their utmost bound, beyond which they cannot go.

Ver. 15. *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me. Selah.*] And doubtless God will rescue me from that imminent danger wherein I am (ver. 5.) of being destroyed, and not let me descend into the grave, but live to have dominion over them; for he hath graciously received me into his favour (so that if I die, I shall still have this comfort remaining, that he will one day raise me out of my grave again).

Ver. 16. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased.*] Be not thou then troubled, nor dismayed, (no more than I, ver. 5.) whosoever thou art that hearest or readest this, when thou seest a worldly man grow very rich, and great honours heaped on his family; which enable and embolden him, perhaps, to use the meaner sort contemptuously:

Ver. 17. *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.*] For he can by no means, as I told thee, purchase the privilege of living one moment longer than God pleases; and when he dies, he is no greater than other men: for he can carry none of his wealth along with him; nor shall he that was so terrible here be at all regarded in the other world.

Ver. 18. *Though while he lived he blessed his soul (and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.)*] For all his happiness ends with this life, (why shouldest thou then be troubled at his prosperity?) which he spends in luxury

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and riot, pride and vanity, applauding himself in his riches and in his pleasures, and having a company of flatterers about him; who will commend thee too, if thou wilt imitate him in indulging thine own appetite, and denying nothing to thyself and companions, but doing no good to any body else.

Ver. 19. *He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.*] And he arrives, perhaps, at the age of his forefathers, whose steps he follows; but after that shall all be alike miserable, and never more partake of the least joy or consolation.

Ver. 20. *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*] So true it is, which was said before (and so little cause there is to envy such men's greatness), that a man raised to great dignity in this world, and never considers how short his honour is, (ver. 15.) behaves himself like a brute while he lives; and, thinking of no such thing, is cut off like a brute, whom nobody regards when he is dead.

PSALM L.

A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

The author of this Psalm, the title tells us (as we translate it), was Asaph, who composed several songs, as well as David, for the use of the tabernacle, as we read in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. But whether he was Asaph the Levite, who lived in the same age with David, or some other prophet in aftertimes, cannot be certainly resolved. It seems to me that it was not the former; because he is never, that I remember, called Asaph the seer, as the other is; whose psalms Hezekiah caused to be sung together with those of king David. And therefore I judge it most likely that he lived in aftertimes, in the reign of some pious prince, such as Jehoshaphat; or, which is most probable, in the days of Hezekiah himself; (see Psal. xliv.) who, though he had reformed the worship of God, yet could not amend men's minds; but there still remained, this prophet observed, abundance of hypocrisy among them: both among the people, who placed all religion in sacrifices, and other external rites and ceremonies; and among the doctors of the law and the judges, who taught the people their duty, but observed none of those precepts themselves which they expounded to others.

Both these this holy man awakens, by this Psalm, to a consideration of the danger they were in; representing God as the supreme judge of the world, coming in an amazing manner to call them all to a strict account, and to take a severe vengeance on them, unless they amended; which began to come upon them by Sennacherib: whom God threatened to send *against the hypocritical nation:* (Isa. x. 6.) and calls that time, *the day of his visitation,* (ver. 3.) when Sennacherib overran all the country, (as Isaiah prophesied, viii. 7, 8.) till he came to Jerusalem: upon which city Nebuchadnezzar completely executed the judgment here threatened, when he destroyed Jerusalem and the temple itself; unto which it was to no purpose to bring a multitude of sacrifices, while they continued the evil of their doings, (Isa. i. 13. 16.)

In both which days of visitation, first by the king of Assyria, and then by the king of Babylon, the Psalmist here represents the Divine Majesty, after the manner of men, like to a king coming out of his palace, attended by his ministers, with the ensigns of terror carried before him; and issuing out his orders to summon all his subjects to appear at his tribunal, and hear their accusation read, with the sentence he would pronounce upon them.

Ver. 1. *THE mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*] The omnipotent Majesty, the supreme Judge of heaven and earth, to whom the greatest kings and potentates are but subjects; the eternal Lord, who changes not, hath given out his orders, that all the people of the land, from east to west, be summoned to appear before him.

Ver. 2. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*] He will go forth in the greatest splendour out of his magnificent palace, where he dwells in Zion; and let you see how much his incomparable excellencies and perfections are to be reverenced.

Ver. 3. *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*] Our God will undoubtedly come and reckon with you, though now he seems to take no notice of your impiety: and he will not come like earthly princes, before whom there marches an armed multitude, but in a far more terrible and irresistible manner; which shall make you as sensible of his dreadful presence, as your ancestors were at Mount Sinai, when the devouring flames, and thunder, and lightning, which attended on him, made the very mountain quake and tremble. (Exod. xix. 16. 18. Isa. ix 18, 19.)

Ver. 4. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*] He shall call heaven and earth to be witnesses of the equity of his proceedings; (Isa. i.2.) and you may as soon move them out of their place, as avoid appearing before his tribunal.

Ver. 5. *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*] He will send out his officers, with a peremptory charge, saying, Bring those men before me, whom I have obliged above all other people, and separated to myself to be a holy nation; (Deut. xiv. 2.) and who have engaged themselves to me in such a solemn covenant, confirmed by the blood of sacrifices, that they wish they might perish, in like manner, if they did not observe it, (Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19.)

Ver. 6. *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*] They shall have a fair trial, whether they have so done or not: for the justice of his judgment shall be as conspicuous as the heavens; because God himself, who cannot do unrighteously, will examine the cause, and pronounce the sentence.

Ver. 7. *Hear, O my people, and I will speak: O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.*] Imagine then, that all things being thus prepared, you hear him calling to you, saying, Hearken, O my people, for I have something to say to thee. O Israel, my beloved people, hearken; for I must admonish and convince thee of the breach of those laws, which I, the supreme lawgiver, and thy most gracious God, have given to thee, (Exod. xx. 2.)

Ver. 8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy*

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burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me.] I do not mean those concerning sacrifices; I have no complaint to make about that matter: thy burnt-offerings, I acknowledge, never fail to be brought both morning and evening to my altar; and I see how busy thou art in that employment:

Ver. 9. *I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds.*] But is this all that I require of thee? do not mistake thyself, nor think that I will be content all the rest of my laws should be broken, if you do but multiply sacrifices, of which I have no need; or if I had, need not be beholden unto thee, for the very best of them.

Ver. 10. *For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*] For I could be supplied out of my own folds and herds, which thou hast nothing to do withal; having all the beast of the forest at my command, with the cattle that graze on more hills than thou hast ever seen.

Ver. 11. *I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine.*] I know also where the fowls of the mountains build their nests, which thou canst not reach; and the wild beasts in the open fields, whom thou canst not enclose, are all ready at hand to do me service.

Ver. 12. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*] If I were hungry, I would not come to acquaint thee with it, that thou mightest provide me food: why should I be beholden to thy poverty, when I am so rich? for the whole world is mine, and all that it contains.

Ver. 13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*] Canst thou be so absurd as to imagine that I need meat or drink? and for that reason call daily for the flesh of bulls, and the blood of goats, to satisfy my hunger, and to quench my thirst? or that my nature is such, that I can be pleased merely with the smoke of those upon my altar?

Ver. 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High.*] They have their use: but if thou wilt bring me acceptable sacrifices, know that I value, in the first place, a truly thankful heart, which gratefully acknowledges my benefits, above all the peace-offerings in the world; and next, that I expect thou shouldest faithfully perform all the vows and promises thou makest, when thou beggest any blessing of me; and not think to put me off (who am too great to be dallied withal) with sin-offerings for the breach of them.

Ver. 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*] And, thirdly, devoutly commend thyself unto me, when thou art in any trouble, by ardent prayer; piously confiding in me, and thou shalt find it more powerful than all burnt-offerings: for I will certainly deliver thee, that thou mayest honour me with thy praises, and proclaim my power and goodness, to invite others unto my service.

Ver. 16. *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?*] Not that this is all that I require of thee; for if thou leadest a wicked life, and art injurious to thy neighbours, what care I for thy praises, or for thy zeal, to boot, in pressing my commands upon others, which thou dost not observe thyself? thou braggest thou art a doctor of the law, and thou declarest to the people my will and pleasure, and makest often mention of my covenant, whereby they stand bound to be obedient to me; but to what purpose is it? or with what face canst thou do it?

Ver. 17. *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.*] Since, by thy example, thou teachest them to contemn all those instructions to which thou hatest to be bound thyself; and by thy actions declarest thou hast no regard at all to any thing, either that I have bidden thee do, or threatened I will do to those that violate my precepts.

Ver. 18. *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.*] When thou hast observed a man thrive by stealth and robbery, instead of having him punished, thou hast greedily accepted the proffer of being a sharer with him; and, which is worse, the adulterers find favour with thee, and thou art partaker with them in their filthiness.

Ver. 19. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.*] Thou lettest thy tongue loose to slanders; and backbitest those who are not present to answer for themselves; and dost not stick to contrive artificial lies and deceits, to cheat those that have any dealing with thee.

Ver. 20. *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*] Nay, when thou sittest in open court, solemnly to judge men according to the law, thou makest bold to speak falsely (for a reward); and that not against a stranger, but thy own brother: yea, thou wilt not spare him that lay in the same womb with thee; but load him with calumnies and reproaches.

Ver. 21. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*] All this wickedness thou hast committed, and I have forborne to punish thee: but instead of amending thy life, to which my patience should have invited thee, thou hast presumed so much upon my lenity, as to add another sin to all the rest; and imagined that I am ignorant of what is done in secret, or am altogether as well pleased with these things as thyself: and therefore now I have sharply rebuked thee for them (so hateful they are to me) and set them all in order (that thou mayest see nothing can escape my knowledge) distinctly before thy eyes.

Ver. 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*] Let this be a warning to you, and to all those that abuse the patience and long-suffering of God; never thinking of his just severity against such wicked doers. Consider this seriously, and repent in time, lest my patience be turned into indignation and wrath; and I lay hold on you, and snatch you away, to suffer your deserved punishment: and none of your companions, whom you have served in their sins, shall be able to give you any relief; but all perish together with you.

Ver. 23. *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*] Remember I have told you what sacrifices I am well pleased with; not with those of beasts, but with the sacrifice of praise and hearty thanksgiving for all my benefits; which doth me more honour than all the lifeless sacrifices of bulls and goats: but he that thus devoutly worships me, must take care withal to dispose his

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life into a conformity with all my precepts; for this is the man whom I will make partaker of the blessings which I have promised.

PSALM LI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

ARGUMENT.

Here now begins a new collection of some Psalms, whereof David was the author: which, I suppose, were found after the first book was published, and this second begun; to the end of which from this place they continue: as we read expressly, Psal. lxxii. *ult.* For though the author of the two last before that be not mentioned in the title, yet the very matter of them, as well as the conclusion of the book, assure us they were composed by David; who, in this fifty-first Psalm (as the title tells us), most sadly bewails the sin which he had committed with Bath-sheba, and those that followed it. In which he had also continued for some time, till Nathan the prophet came with a message from God to reprove him, and to pronounce a very sore judgment against him and his family for his crimes.

After this Divine reprehension and threatening, he was very much humbled, and, to make himself as notorious an example of true repentance as he had been of foul wickedness, he composed this penitential hymn: and sent it to the master of the music in the tabernacle, to be used perpetually there; as a testimony of his unfeigned sorrow for what he had done, and of the miserable condition he thought himself in, without the infinite mercy of God to him. Which he begs with the greatest earnestness, together with the assistances of his grace; which he promises to employ for the reducing other sinners, beseeching him withal to be favourable to his people, especially to the city of Jerusalem; and not let them and that suffer for his offences.

Ver. 1. *HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*] O God, the supreme judge of the world, whom I have most highly offended many ways, and therefore may most justly be condemned to suffer the effects of thy severest displeasure; I cast down myself before thee, and humbly supplicate for mercy: unto which I am encouraged by thy known clemency, and thy infinite compassions; which will move thee, I hope, to take pity upon a grievous sinner, and to pardon the adultery and bloodshed, accompanied with a number of foul circumstances, which I have committed.

Ver. 2. *Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*] I have made myself indeed exceeding loathsome by my repeated wickedness, which, like a stain that hath long stuck to a garment, is not easily got out: but do not therefore, I beseech thee, abhor me, but rather magnify thy mercy in purifying me perfectly, and cleansing me so throughly, that there may be no spot remaining in me.

Ver. 3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.*] For how stupid soever I was, before thou sentest thy prophet to awaken me, I am now deeply touched with a sense of my horrid transgressions: which I both sorrowfully confess and bewail in thy presence, and in the face of the public congregation; and carry also a sad and amazing remembrance thereof continually before my eyes.

Ver. 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*] Not because I stand in fear of punishment from men, who have no power over me; but because I am so obnoxious to thee, whose judgments I ought to dread the more, the less I am liable to give an account of my actions unto others. O how it afflicts me, that I presumed, because I had none to control me here on earth, to offend thy majesty, thy all-seeing majesty; at whose tribunal the highest must be judged: and if thou shouldest pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me for my crimes, and execute it also with the greatest severity, I could not accuse thee of too much rigour; but must still justify thee in thy proceedings, and clear thee from all such unjust imputations!

Ver. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.*] It is true, indeed, and thou, O Lord, knowest it better than I, that there is in me an innate proneness to evil; but I am so far from representing this as an excuse for what I have done, that I confess the consideration of it ought to have made me the more watchful and diligent to suppress those bad inclinations; which I knew to be so natural, that I brought them into the world with me.

Ver. 6. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*] I am amazed at my folly, that I should be so careless; when I was not ignorant that thou requirest us not to entertain, with the least kindness, those first motions which we find in our thoughts and desires after any evil, but uprightly to oppose them; for which end thou hast put a principle of better motions into us, and endued me with wisdom, which secretly checks and corrects those brutish inclinations.

Ver. 7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*] I have nothing therefore to say in my own behalf, but wholly betake myself to thee for a gracious pardon of my sin, which every thing I can think of sadly aggravates. I am as impure as a leper, and deserve to be banished from thy presence, and shut out from among thy people; far more impure by touching Bath-sheba, than he is that toucheth a dead body; yet I am not so foul, but, if thou pleasest, thou canst purify me, and make me as clean and white as snow: vouchsafe me that grace, O Lord; expiate me, I beseech thee, (Lev. xiv. 6. Numb. xix. 17, 18.) and restore me perfectly unto thy favour, and the happy fruits of it, which I have justly forfeited and lost.

Ver. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*] Raise me out of this wofully dejected state wherein I lie; and as the terrible message I received by thy prophet, hath cast me into such insufferable anguish and pain, as if my bones were crushed in pieces by my fall: so send me the most comfortable news of my reconciliation with thee; to ease me of the torment I endure under the weight of my guilt, and the sense

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of thy heavy displeasure; and to turn it into the height of joy and gladness.

Ver. 9. *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*] Remember not any longer how wicked I have been; nor lay any sin to my charge: but pass by all my transgressions, and acquit me from the punishment they deserve.

Ver. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*] And bestow upon me withal such purity of heart (which, alas! I have lost, and am not able to recover without thy grace), that I may utterly hereafter detest all such filthy motions: and, because we are apt to revolt from our good resolutions, do thou daily supply me with fresh strength from above, to confirm and settle them, that I may never return to folly.

Ver. 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*] I deserve, I confess, to be rejected by thee, as my predecessor was, (1 Sam. xv. 25, 26.) and to be admitted no more into thy favour: but I humbly beseech thee, deal not so severely with me, nor deprive me (as thou didst him, compare 1 Sam. x. 6. with xvi. 14.) of the gift of thy Holy Spirit, wherewith thou hast anointed me, (ver. 13.)

Ver. 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.*] Let not that evil spirit which troubled him seize on me; but restore to me the joy which I was wont to have, when I saw myself so much in thy favour as to be delivered by thee out of the greatest danger: (Psal. xxi. 1.) support me and my authority, with such a cheerful, free, and generous spirit, as becomes him whom thou hast appointed to be the governor of thy people:

Ver. 13. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*] That I may have the confidence to admonish those of their duty that transgress thy laws (as I will not fail to do), and they may not take the boldness to despise my instructions: but the very worst of them may, by my authority and my example, be reclaimed from their sinful lives, and become, like me, thy faithful servants.

Ver. 14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*] Though I have added the sin of murder to that of adultery, the murder of a trusty servant, of several of my servants, (2 Sam. xi. 17.) who by my order were exposed to that danger wherein they lost their lives; let it not hinder this grace which I beg of thee; but, O God, the God from whom I have received so many deliverances and blessings, vouchsafe this one favour more, to deliver me from the punishment due to this crying sin: and I will not spare to proclaim, as loud as ever I can, thy infinite goodness and clemency; together with thy truth and faithfulness in thy promises to returning sinners: it shall be my joy to speak of these, though therewithal I publish my own most horrid wickedness.

Ver. 15. *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*] Try me, O God, and let the sense of thy gracious pardon give me the boldness and liberty to open my lips (which shame, confusion, and fear, have closed and shut up), and my mouth shall every where declare thy mercy to thy perpetual praise and renown.

Ver. 16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.*] This shall be the sacrifice I will offer to thee, as an acknowledgment of thy kindness; but that of beasts, I know, thou desirest not I should bring thee: the whole burnt-offerings being no pleasure at all to thee, but only as they are tokens of a grateful mind.

Ver. 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*] With which I will also join that Divine sacrifice of an humble, sorrowful, and penitent heart: for a soul that is truly contrite, and entirely submits its will to thine, is such an acceptable sacrifice, that thou canst not possibly reject it.

Ver. 18. *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*] And the same mercy I desire for myself, I beg also for all thy people. Spare them, good Lord, and let not my folly be the occasion of bringing upon them any calamity; or upon that city, which is called after my name, where I have set both thy throne and mine: (2 Sam. v. 7. 9. vi. 16.) but be favourable to that place, and do it good; let the walls of Jerusalem, which I have begun to build, (2 Sam. v. 9.) be perfectly finished, (1 Kings iii. 1. xi. 27.)

Ver. 19. *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*] Then shall the righteous be very thankful to thee; and express it by bringing peace-offerings in abundance, and all other sacrifices: they shall offer thee the choicest sacrifices upon thy altar, (1 Kings iii. 5. viii. 63, 64.) which from such pious persons shall be acceptable to thy majesty.

PSALM LII.

To the chief Musician. Maschil. A Psalm of David; when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the House of Ahimelech.

ARGUMENT.

The title sufficiently instructs every one about the author, and in the occasion of this Psalm, if they will but read the history to which it directs them in 1 Sam. xxii. where Doeg (one of the seed of Esau, or that had lived so long among them, that he had got the name, as well as the savage manners, of the Edomites), to ingratiate himself with Saul, pretended to discover those who were confederate with David, particularly Ahimelech; whom he undertook also to kill, together with all his family, when others refused that bloody charge which Saul would have imposed on them. And when he had done, it should seem he bragged of it, as if it had been some gallant action, or famous achievement; as is intimated, I take it, in the first verse of the Psalm. Which David penned when Abiathar (who was the only person that escaped in that slaughter, whereby they thought to terrify others from harbouring David, or shewing any kindness to him) came and brought him the sad tidings of what was befallen their city. And it was afterward delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle, to be sung in perpetual memory of the thing, to the vulgar tune called *Maschil;* (see Psal. xxxii.) or, as Theodoret seems here to expound the word, to fortify those with patience and constancy who unjustly suffer, by instructing them in the justice of the Divine sentence in the issue.

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Ver. 1. *WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.*] A goodly feat, indeed, for a man to boast of! that he hath killed eighty-five innocent and unarmed priests, together with a company of women, children, and sucklings, (1 Sam. xxii. 19.) A mighty champion thou art, who vapourest, no doubt, that thou wilt do the like execution upon me: but know, vain man, that the goodness of God, whereby I have been hitherto preserved, (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 3. 5.) will still defend me; for it is not a thing of short continuance, like our prince's favour, but lasts for ever.

Ver. 2. *The tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*] O thou contriver of false stories! who pretendest to be the only or most loyal person in the court of Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 8, 9.) but art an egregious hypocrite; a mere designer of mischief to others, thereby to advance thyself: thy tongue was the first instrument in this butchery, being sharpened by thy malice on purpose like a razor newly set, to cut the throats of the guiltless, that thou mightest seem to be the most zealous of all others for the safety of the king's person and government.

Ver. 3. *Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.*] To have told the plain truth would not have served thy ambition and thy malice, which make thee love to do mischief rather than good offices unto others, and to devise lies against Ahimelech, rather than to declare his innocence.

Ver. 4. *Thou lovest all-devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.*] Thou carest not whom thou destroyest, but can swallow up a whole city at a morsel: O thou false tongue, who, to curry favour with thy prince, devisest the most impudent lies against those that never offended him.

Ver. 5. *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever: he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.*] The great God, whose priests thou hast slain, shall avenge their cause, and pull thee from that greatness and honour, to which thou seekest, by this vile means, to raise thyself: and more than that, he will pay thee in the same coin thou hast dealt to them; for he will utterly destroy thee, and snatch thee away as hastily as thou didst those innocents; just so will he pluck thee from the tabernacle of God, (where thou wast wont to pretend devotion, 1 Sam. xxi. 7.) and root out, not only thee, but all thy family, from the face of the earth.

Ver. 6. *The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him.*] Which just judgment of God upon thee all good men shall mark, and be confirmed thereby in their pious fear of offending him; and, reflecting upon thy vain devices to greaten thyself and family, shall deride thy folly, saying as I do;

Ver. 7. *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*] Behold that mighty man, that principal favourite, who regarded not God, nor sought to support himself by his favour, but laid the foundation of his fortune (as we speak) merely in abundance of riches, and the favour of his prince; in which also he endeavoured to establish himself, not by honest means, but by the most perfidious arts, and cruel enterprises: what now is become of him? and where is his greatness? Lo, his ambitious hopes are all vanished and come to nothing.

Ver. 8. *But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*] Whilst I, at whom he principally aimed in his murderous design, am still, blessed be God, in safety; nay, compared with that destruction which shall fall on him, in a flourishing condition: for he shall drop away like a withered leaf; but I grow and increase in strength, like a green olive-tree planted in the courts of God's house; whose mercy, I trust, will preserve me to my life's end from all the mischiefs they devise against me, and make me more and more flourishing, both in my person and in my posterity.

Ver. 9. *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.*] For which I will never cease to praise thee, because I owe it entirely to thee that I am not destroyed; and I will patiently expect the accomplishment of thy promises to me: for all thy pious servants have ever found this to be the best and wisest course, to depend upon thy omnipotent goodness and faithful promises, and not to imitate those wicked men, who study to advance or preserve themselves by flattery, or other viler practices.

PSALM LIII.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath. Maschil. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm and the fourteenth differ so little, that it hath troubled interpreters to give a reason for the repetition of the same thing, almost in the same words. There is some variation, indeed, in every verse, but it is merely the change of one word for another of the same import: (as, for example, *God* for *Lord*, ver. 2. 4. 9.) except only verse the fifth, where there is a much greater alteration; and the sixth wholly omitted; which makes it probable there was some new occasion for the using this hymn again, though an occasion exceeding like the former. What it was writers do but guess; and if I take the liberty also to interpose my conjecture, it will be nothing so remote as all those that I have met withal seem to be.

If we suppose the defection of the people in the rebellion of Absalom, to have been the matter of his complaint in the fourteenth Psalm, then it looks like a probability, that the new revolt which the Israelites generally made, immediately after the other, before David had quite recovered Jerusalem, and his settlement there, was the occasion of this. For you read, that upon the quarrel which arose between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, about precedency in bringing back the king, Sheba blew the trumpet of rebellion afresh; and it is said, that every man of Israel left David, and followed after him, (2 Sam. xx. 2.) This is the revolt, I apprehend, here spoken of, ver. 3. where the Psalmist says, *Every one of them is gone back.* And a dangerous revolt it was, as David apprehended, more dangerous than the former, unless timely checked; (2 Sam. xx. 6.) which made him, before all his army could be assembled, (ver. 5.) send his guards to pursue him speedily: (ver. 7.) as they did through all the tribes of Israel, (ver. 14.) Who being afraid of the issue (ver. 5. of this Psalm), fell off from Sheba more and more, the farther he went, and left him at last to shift for himself, so that he was shut up in the city of Abel, there

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taken, and beheaded, (ver. 22.) After which, his body, it is likely, was exposed to the fowls of the air, or the wild beasts; insomuch that his bones were, indeed, at last scattered, (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 5.) and all his adherents made contemptible.

This David desired should be commemorated together with his deliverance from Absalom's rebellion; and therefore, making a review of the fourteenth Psalm (wherein that distress is described), he delivered it again to the master of the music (as appeared after the first collection of the book of Psalms was finished), with some small alterations, relating to this new business; desiring God, for instance, to give them still some farther and new *salvation*, (ver. 6.) For the word here is in the plural number, but in the fourteenth Psalm in the singular; which hath made me render it here *complete salvation*, which he implores with the same earnestness he had done before, and orders also how the Psalm shall be sung upon *Mahalath*, or the hollow instrument (flute or pipe) to the tune of *Maschil*, (or as a caveat against rebellion, see Psal. xxxii.)

If any be not satisfied with this account of the Psalm, because of the word *captivity*, in the last verse, which they may think ought to be taken properly; then they may suppose this Psalm to have been reviewed by Asaph the seer, in the days of Hezekiah, when abundance of the people had been indeed carried captive, (Isa. v. 13.) But there is no need to have recourse to this: for the word *captivity* imports no more, in some places, but only *great desolation;* such as was made of Job's estate and family, (xlii. 10.) and by the Philistines, when Shiloh was destroyed, (Judg. xviii. 30, 31.)

Ver. 1. *THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*] Though the wicked are not yet so impudent as openly to deny God with their mouths; yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts sure are, God takes no notice of what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2. *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.*] But let them know that he exactly observes them, and all the ways of the sons of men, which are naked and bare before his eyes; though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

Ver. 3. *Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*] The Israelites have made a new separation, and are entirely revolted; being like a body without spirit, so rotten and putrefied, that it is hard to find so much as one that hath any kind of goodness in him.

Ver. 4. *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.*] Strange, that they should still be thus senseless! and (after such a defeat as they have lately received) continue to work iniquity; nay, to be cruel and void of all pity and compassion to my poor people; the reason is, they have no religion.

Ver. 5. *There were they in great fear, where no fear was; for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.*] And none more cowardly than such atheistical wretches; whose courage so soon failed them, that a panic fear seized them before my forces could approach them: for they ran away, and dispersed themselves, when I sent but a small party after them. God, O my soul, hath broken him in pieces, and his bones lie scattered on the ground, who thought to oppress thee: thou hast obtained this favour of him, to put them to shame; for he despised those who had so little regard to his majesty.

Ver. 6. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*] And he is mighty to save (whatsoever such wicked people think), and resides, by a special token of his presence there, on Mount Zion: O that it might please him to complete our deliverance from thence; and restore us all again to the happy enjoyment of that place, from whence we have been banished! it would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings; and fill not only Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness.

PSALM LIV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. Maschil. A Psalm of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, the title tells us, was composed, when (not long after the butchery of Doeg) the Ziphites, a false people, void of humanity, and that sought nothing but how to raise themselves, though by another's ruin, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Saul, by discovering to him where David lurked in their neighbourhood: (1 Sam. xxiii. 14. 19.) and undertook to guide the king to the very place, and assist the forces he should send to take him, (ver. 20, &c.) By which means David was brought into such a great strait, (ver. 26.) that if Saul had not been diverted by a sudden invasion which the Philistines made, he could not have escaped him. In this distress he made his address to God by prayer, in the words of the three first verses of this Psalm. But on a sudden (hearing, I suppose, how Saul himself was alarmed with the news of an invasion) he breaks out (ver. 4, 5.) into admiration of God's goodness. And when the danger was quite over, added, I suppose, the two last verses; wherein he expresses with what joy he took a view, from the mountain where he lay hid, of Saul's forces as they retreated. Which was a thing so memorable, that, when he came to the kingdom, he delivered the whole to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung, as the fourth Psalm, to the tune of *Maschil.*

Ver. 1. *SAVE me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.*] O God, whose name imports that thou art the supreme judge, and therefore the defender and protector of all injured and oppressed persons, I humbly implore thy aid in this great distress; beseeching thee, who can easily do it, to deliver me from my enemies, and, by thy almighty power, vindicate my innocence; and maintain my

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righteous cause against those that are too strong for me, and wrongfully seek to destroy me.

Ver. 2. *Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*] Deny me not this request, O God, I most earnestly entreat thee; but grant the petitions of thy poor servant, who hath nothing but his prayers to oppose to all those forces that surround him.

Ver. 3. *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.*] And they are conducted by barbarous people, whom I have no way disobliged, for I never had any thing to do with them; and yet they have undertaken to deliver me into the hand of Saul, and those formidable enemies that are come to seek my life; (1 Sam. xxiii. 20.) having no regard to God at all; but only studying, right or wrong, to gain the favour of their prince.

Ver. 4. *Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*] O the wonderful goodness of God! who in this deplorable condition sends me, in a strange and unexpected manner, most seasonable relief! Behold, how he takes my part, the Lord preserves my life: for, alas! the small forces I have with me, are unable to secure it; and can by no means support me against those numerous enemies that thought to destroy me.

Ver. 5. *He shall reward evil unto my enemies: cut them off in thy truth.*] And as for those spies that undertook to find out all my hiding places, (1 Sam. xxiii. 22, 23.) he shall bring the mischief they intended to me upon themselves: take a just vengeance on them, and execute thy threatenings, O Lord, against such treacherous persons.

Ver. 6. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good.*] In the mean time I will not be sparing in expressing my thankfulness for what thou hast done already, but make thee my grateful acknowledgments both in word and deed. First, I will offer thee liberal sacrifices; and then I will accompany them with my praises of thy wisdom, power, and goodness, O Lord; which is the most pleasing sacrifice, I know, unto thee, and the most delightful employment.

Ver. 7. *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*] Who, by his special providence, am marvellously delivered out of that distress wherein I was, and all the dangers which it threatened: for my eyes now dare look upon those enemies in their retreat, from whom I lately fled for fear. (1 Sam. xxiii. 26—28.)

PSALM LV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. Maschil. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was sent to the master of the music, to be sung as the former: having an occasion something like it. For the complaint which he makes in the middle of the Psalm, that his greatest confidant proved treacherous to him, makes it probable that it was composed when Absalom's rebellion broke out, and he was forced to flee suddenly from Jerusalem: and, as he was going barefoot upon Mount Olivet (he and all his company weeping), to increase his sorrow, met the news that Ahithophel also was among the conspirators, 2 Sam. xv. 31. Upon which, we read there, he presently fell to his prayers; and as soon as he came to a place where he could rest, and retire himself, he represented, it is likely, the sadness of his condition more largely in this Psalm: beseeching God to disappoint the conspirators, (ver. 9.) First, because of the violence they had committed at Jerusalem: ver. 9—11. and, secondly, because of the vile treachery of Ahithophel, from the twelfth to the fifteenth, which seems to me ought to be connected with the beginning of the ninth verse; for he goes on, in the fifteenth, to beseech God to defeat them all, which he had begun in the ninth, but breaks off to insert his reasons why he was so earnest: and then, in the conclusion, he exhorts all those that adhered to him not to be discouraged, but to cast their care upon the Lord; who would reward their pious confidence in him, by protecting and delivering them, and destroying their and his enemies.

Ver. 1. *GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.*] O God, the supreme judge of all the world, I most humbly address myself to thee, who art inclined to relieve those that are oppressed: beseeching thee not to reject a poor supplicant, but graciously to receive his petition which he puts up unto thee.

Ver. 2. *Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise.*] Let the sadness of my condition move thee to consider and relieve me; which I am not able to represent in my prayer, without shrieks and lamentable cries: so great is the perturbation of my mind.

Ver. 3. *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*] Because my own son is become my enemy, and hath blown the trumpet of rebellion against me, (2 Sam. xv. 10.) and because of the sore straits to which he hath wickedly reduced me: for which, that there might be some colour, he and his associates load me with false accusations, and say I am unjust, and take no care of my people, (ver. 3, 4.) and therefore furiously set themselves against me to dethrone me.

Ver. 4. *My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.*] This is a sore grief unto my heart, and puts me into the very agonies of death: which, without thy mercy, I must suddenly expect, (2 Sam. xvii. 2.)

Ver. 5. *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.*] The suddenness and strength of this conspiracy have struck me into such a fear, as makes me tremble: I am involved in such difficulties, that, which way soever I look, horror and consternation seize upon me.

Ver. 6. *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*] In this confusion I rather wished than hoped to escape, (2 Sam. xv. 14.) saying, Who will lend me wings as swift as those of a dove, that I may flee away to some place of safety and repose?

Ver. 7. *Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.*] Lo, then would I go to some far-distant country, though I wandered I knew not whither; (2 Sam. xv. 20.) I would hide myself in some desert place, remote from all society.

Ver. 8. *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm*

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and tempest.] And I would make all the haste imaginable to escape this fierce persecution, (2 Sam. xvii. 16. 21.) which is risen like a sudden storm of wind, or violent tempest, and threatens utterly to subvert me.

Ver. 9. *Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.*] O Lord, let that speedy destruction swallow up them which they design against me, (2 Sam. xvii. 16.) divide their counsels, and raise dissensions among them: (2 Sam. xv. 34. xvii. 14, 15.) for I am certainly informed, that, by rapine and cruelty, brawling and contention, they have filled the whole city of Jerusalem with tumult and confusion.

Ver. 10. *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.*] There is nothing else to be seen, either by day or by night: for they that guard the gates, or go the rounds, make it their business to ravage and spoil, to pick quarrels, and fall out with every body they meet withal; and such as run to the main guards, in hope to meet with some relief, are miserably deceived: for there the same iniquity, oppression, and injurious dealing, keep their station.

Ver. 11. *Wickedness is in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*] There is no place free either from their open violence, or secret fraud and deceit; but they barbarously abuse, or cunningly circumvent, the inhabitants, both within doors and without.

Ver. 12. *For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him.*] And there is one most notorious traitor, whose ingratitude deserves to be severely punished; for he hath maliciously reproached and calumniated me and my government, when I thought of no such treachery: for we never had any quarrel (then his treason would not have been so strange, but far more tolerable), nor did he give any sign of hatred to me; for then I could have secured myself, by withdrawing from his familiarity.

Ver. 13. *But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.*] No; thou, O most perfidious of all mankind, who contrivest this mischief against me, wast the person whom I esteemed above all others; whom I loved as myself; whose counsel I ever followed; and to whom, as my friend, I unbosomed all my secrets.

Ver. 14. *We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.*] Whose conversation was most delightful to me, and to whom I thought I had been tied, not only by the bond of civil friendship, but (which is far stronger) of religion.

Ver. 15. *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*] Let death seize on them as unexpectedly as this treason broke out against me: let them sink on a sudden into the grave, when they think of nothing less; for wheresoever they go, all manner of mischief marches along with them.

Ver. 16. *As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.*] As for me, I will injure nobody to preserve myself, but only commend myself and my cause to God, the righteous judge: and the almighty Lord, who changes not, will deliver me as he hath done formerly.

Ver. 17. *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.*] For this I will not cease to solicit him when I go to bed, and when I rise, and before I take my repast; both in my inward thoughts, and with my mouth, in silent desires and lamentable moans, I will never give over my importunity, till he graciously grant my petition, and send me relief.

Ver. 18. *He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.*] He will rescue me from the hand of this rebellious army which comes against me, and restore me to my throne in peace: for be they never so numerous, there is a far greater power on my side, to defend me, and to fight for me.

Ver. 19. *God shall hear and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.*] God himself, who hath so long governed the world most justly, and never alters nor changes, will hear my prayer, and bring down their pride: for having prospered hitherto in their villany, there is not one of them that repents; but they all pertinaciously persist in their rebellion, without any fear of the Divine vengeance.

Ver. 20. *He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he hath broken his covenant.*] Especially that perfidious person, who hath not only violated all the laws of friendship, but profanely broken his promise and oath of fidelity, wherein he was engaged to me.

Ver. 21. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*] Nothing can be falser than he; who entertained me with the fairest and smoothest language, when, at the same time, he was contriving this rebellion in his heart: all his soft words and tender professions of kindness to me, served only to hide his design of giving me a mortal wound.

Ver. 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*] But why do I trouble myself any farther with him? be not dejected, O my soul (and let me give this counsel to every one that adheres to me), but, reposing thy humble trust in God, cast all the burdens of thy cares upon him, who will certainly support thee under any troubles that he is pleased to impose upon thee. Preserve thy integrity; and, though thou mayest be shaken and disturbed for a time, he will not suffer thee to be moved out of thy place, but quietly settle thee there again.

Ver. 23. *But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.*] But as for those that have given me this disturbance, thou, O God, wilt bring them to an untimely end, and throw them headlong into the pit of destruction. They are men that thirst after blood, and by all manner of fraud and treachery endeavour to compass their ends: and such shall perish in the flower of their age, when I trust to spend my days in prosperity and peace.

PSALM LVI.

To the chief Musician, upon Jonath-elem-rechokim. Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by David, when, for fear of Saul, he fled like an innocent dove into remote countries. More

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particularly when he was forced to take shelter among the Philistines in Gath, (1 Sam. xxi.) where the lords of the court brought him to king Achish, with such high commendations of his valour, as he thought might endanger his life. And therefore he put on the guise of a man beside himself; silently bewailing the sadness of his condition, which constrained him to make use of such artifices; and complaining to God of the cruelty of his enemies, who had driven him into this and many other straits: but making no remonstrances to Achish how he was used, nor begging his assistance against them. Not a word of this; which is the reason, possibly, why he compares himself here in the title to a *silent* or *dumb dove*, if interpreters rightly understand the words *Jonath-elem*, which they expound in that manner. And Kimchi thinks, he the rather compares himself to a *dove*, because that is accounted a *silly* creature; (Hos. vii. 11.) and David now seemed no better.

And this is the reason that this Psalm is also called *Michtam*, (see Psal. xvi.) because it is a commemoration of God's singular care over him, in many great dangers, especially at Gath; when he entirely depended upon his favour and love alone; supporting himself (and seeking no farther for help) by his gracious promise to him; which he thankfully acknowledges, especially in the conclusion of this Psalm.

Which was penned, it appears from ver. 8. after many *wanderings* of this good man; first, to Samuel in Naioth, (1 Sam. xix. 18.) then to Jonathan, (xx. 1.) then to Nob, (xxi. 1.) after that to Gath, (ver. 10.) from thence to Adullam, (xxii. 1.) and then, into the country of Moab: (ver. 3.) from whence he was admonished by the prophet Gad, to go to a place of greater security, (ver. 6.) which he found in the forest of Hareth; (1 Sam. xxii. 5.) where, I suppose, he might have a little repose and leisure, to reflect upon what was past, and to compose this Psalm: and from that forest, I fancy, he might call himself, (if we admit of Bochartus's change of one point, lib. i. de Animal. cap. 3. par. ii.) *Jonath-elim-rechokim, a dove in the remote woods.* Where he made this Psalm before the rest of his wanderings to other places, which afterward followed. And when he came to the kingdom, he delivered it to the chief master of music, to be sung after the tune of a song, which began with those words (as Aben Ezra takes it), *Jonath-elim-rechokim.*

Ver. 1. *BE merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me up: he fighting daily oppresseth me.*] O God, the supreme, and therefore impartial, judge of all the world, take pity upon me, I beseech thee, and rescue me from the violence of my enemies: for Saul, forgetting his own mortality, and how unseemly it is for frail man to continue his enmities for ever, most eagerly pursues me, with an unsatiable desire to take away my life: he never intermits his persecutions, but presses me so closely, that he gives me no time to breathe.

Ver. 2. *Mine enemies would daily swallow me up; for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High.*] He sends abroad his spies, to watch all opportunities to ensnare me; for which they gape as greedily as ravenous beasts do for their prey: and great multitudes there are, O thou Most High (who alone canst disappoint them) that, proud of their numbers, and of their power, have insolently set themselves against me to destroy me.

Ver. 3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*] As I have just reason to fear they will, unless I be defended by thee, with whom I have entrusted myself and all my concerns; which is the only thing whereby I overcome those fears when they seize upon me.

Ver. 4. *In God I will praise his word; in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*] By the help of God, I will be so far from being dismayed, that I will rejoice in the faithful promise he hath made to me by his prophet, (1 Sam. xvi. 13. 2 Sam. iii. 9. v. 2.) Though it be not fulfilled presently, yet by his assistance I will depend, as I have done hitherto, upon his fidelity for the performance of it, and never fear what frail man can do to hinder it.

Ver. 5. *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.*] I know what an ill construction my enemies would put upon these words, if they could hear what I say; for they do nothing but wrest the most innocent speeches; and because I profess to confide in God, pretend that I conspire against the king, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) their whole business being nothing else, but to contrive how to do me mischief.

Ver. 6. *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.*] For this end they hold many consultations among themselves, and lay snares privily for me; curiously observing all my motions, and still expecting an opportunity to take away my life.

Ver. 7. *Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.*] Shall this iniquity always go unpunished? Or by their subtilty and craft shall they, who thus unjustly persecute the innocent, escape thy vengeance? O God, the righteous judge, throw down those insolent people, who have so long provoked thy patience, and make them feel the effects of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 8. *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?*] Thou art perfectly acquainted, I am sure, how often I have been forced to fly, like a vagabond, from place to place; which hath cost me many a tear: good Lord, preserve a kind remembrance of them; and let them not perish as things thou nothing regardest. But why am I so importunate for this, since I know thou art so far from despising my misery, that thou art as mindful of it, as if thou keptest a register of every tear, and all my troubles?

Ver. 9. *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.*] My prayer therefore shall prevail when my enemies oppress me, and obtain a glorious victory over them; of this I am assured, because the mighty God, who rules all the world, is on my side.

Ver. 10. *In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word.*] By his gracious assistance I will continue my resolution to rejoice in the faithful promise I beforementioned: he is the eternal Lord, who never alters nor changes, and I will be like him, immutably rejoicing in that faithful promise.

Ver. 11. *In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*] Nothing shall shake the confidence I have reposed in him; nor will I fear what the greatest man can do, were he more powerful than he is,

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to hinder the accomplishment of what the Lord designs for me.

Ver. 12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.*] Nor will I ever be unmindful of the promises I have made to thee, O God; to whom, when I was in distress, I vowed the most grateful acknowledgments, if thou wouldest deliver me: though I am not able to requite thy kindness, yet I will not cease to magnify and extol it with my highest praises.

Ver. 13. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*] For thou hast so remarkably rescued me from death (to thy goodness I ascribe it, not to my policy) when I was in the power of the Philistines, that I ought not to doubt of thy continued preservation of me, from the snares my enemies lay to entrap me, or from the open violence they use to overthrow me: thou wilt support me still to praise thee, and to perform further service to thee here in this world, as I intend to do most sincerely.

PSALM LVII.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith. Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the Cave.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, the title informs us, was penned upon the like occasion with the former. For after several other wanderings, (besides those he speaks of in the foregoing Psalm, ver. 8.) or removes from place to place, mentioned 1 Sam. xxiii. you find David in the strong hold of En-gedi, (ver. 29.) where there was a cave among the rocks, (xxiv. 2, 3.) in which David and his men lurked and hid themselves for fear of Saul. Who, in his pursuit of them, came to ease himself in this very place where they skulked; and thereby presented David with as fair an opportunity, as could be desired, to kill him. Which he might have done without any noise, if his piety and religious resolution to do nothing that was sinful, no, not to gain a kingdom, but (trusting to the faithful promise he speaks of, Psal. lvi. 4. 10.) to wait wholly upon God, to prefer him when and as he pleased to the throne, had not hindered him. For some of his men, observing the advantage, would fain have despatched him, if David had not forbidden the person who was ready to strike the blow, saying, *Al-taschith, thou shalt not destroy him;* or, *destroy him not.* So some expound that word, which we find in the title of the Psalm; though others (observing the same word to be in the title of the two following Psalms, and of the seventy-fifth, which belongeth not to this matter) judge it more probable that *Al-taschith* was the beginning of some song, according to which this Psalm was to be sung. To which, notwithstanding, in my opinion, it may be replied, that those three Psalms which follow after this had that title prefixed, only to shew that they were to be sung like this.

In which David commemorates God's great mercy in mollifying the heart of Saul, at that time, by the kindness and piety which he expressed towards him: remembering, in the first place, what kind of thoughts he had when he was in the cave, and saw himself in manifest danger of being taken by Saul's forces: and then blessing God for the sudden change which was made in his condition, by Saul's falling into his hand, to do what he pleased with him, by the demonstration he gave him, that he had no traitorous thoughts in his heart; but bare still a due reverence to him, notwithstanding the ill usage he received from him.

It is called *Michtam*, for the same reason that the former was, because of the singular favour which God shewed him in this deliverance; more precious to him than any jewel, and that deserved an everlasting remembrance. (See Psal. xvi.)

Ver. 1. *BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.*] O God, the ruler and governor of all the world, I most earnestly beseech thee to be merciful and gracious to me; O take some pity upon me, who rely solely on thy mercy, having no confidence in these fortresses, or secret places, where I hide myself; but trusting merely to thy almighty protection, on which I will still depend, as I have done hitherto, for defence and preservation, till this danger be past, which is now impendent over me, and threatens to destroy me.

Ver. 2. *I will cry unto God most High; unto God that performeth all things for me.*] There is none superior, or equal, to him, unto whom I will continually commend myself; unto that mighty God, who will finish, I hope, what he hath begun to do for me.

Ver. 3. *He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*] There are greater armies in heaven, than those that here surround me; which, rather than I shall perish, he will send for my deliverance; he will expose him to shame and reproach, that gapes like a ravenous beast to devour me: I doubt not of it; for, besides his infinite mercy, I have his promise for my security; in the performance of which, he will visibly declare his fidelity.

Ver. 4. *My soul is among lions; and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword.*] And now there is a fit opportunity, when my life is in extreme danger; for here I lie close, and dare not stir, being encompassed with enemies picked out on purpose to destroy me, (1 Sam. xxiv. 2.) who are as fierce and cruel as lions, and enraged against me so furiously, that they are continually incensing Saul to pursue me; tearing my good name (as they hope to do me) in pieces, and giving the most deadly wound to my reputation, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.)

Ver. 5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.*] Confute them, O God, the most righteous judge of men's actions and intentions; and by delivering me from this imminent danger, raise to thyself the highest praises: and spread the fame of thy glorious power, goodness, wisdom, and truth, throughout all the earth.

Ver. 6. *They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.*] And how ready art thou to hear the prayers of thy faithful servant! For, after all their projects and devices to entrap me, when

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I was just falling into their hands, I am miraculously preserved; and they themselves precipitously run into that very danger, wherein they thought to have caught me, (1 Sam. xxiv. 3—5, &c.)

Ver. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.*] My heart also is ready, O God, my heart is prepared, and firmly resolved to pay thee the vows which I made in my distress; my song shall be of thee; and, with all the joy I can express, I will set forth thy praise.

Ver. 8. *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*] My tongue, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall be no longer silent, or merely full of complaints; nor shall any instrument of music be wanting to accompany my hymns: which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising sun.

Ver. 9. *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto thee among the nations.*] Nor will I content myself with my private acknowledgments of thy goodness; but I will publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung; yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am to thee for what thou hast done.

Ver. 10. *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*] For it is fit my thankfulness should be as boundless as thy mercy; which transcends all my expressions; and hath nothing equal to it, but thy faithfulness and truth.

Ver. 11. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.*] Be thou still exalted in these, O God, and raise to thyself thereby the highest praise: spread the fame of them every where, that thou mayest be glorified throughout all the world.

PSALM LVIII.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith. Michtam of David.

ARGUMENT.

This and the next Psalm, in order of time, precede the foregoing. But it is an ordinary method among the Hebrews to go backward from the last to the first; as they seem to me to do very plainly in these three Psalms, which have the title of *Al-taschith*. For David's first escape, when Saul sent to kill him, was certainly the occasion of Psal. lix. And then Saul calling his privy-council together, who, without any more ado, pronounced him guilty of high-treason; it is the subject of this present Psalm. And after that Saul persecuted him with the greater colour and show of justice, accusing him of the worst of crimes; as he complains in many places, particularly in the Psalm foregoing: which being called *Al-taschith*, for a peculiar reason (see there), this, when it was delivered to the chief musician, was appointed to be sung after the same manner with that, and had the same name given it, with the title of *Michtam* also; because it contains a memorable reproof of those evil counsellors, who, against their conscience, had condemned David, merely to please the king, and give him a pretence to destroy him. And therefore he prophesies a signal vengeance should overtake them (which he would have every body observe); and that so suddenly and dreadfully, that he compares it to the mischief which a whirlwind doth, when it carries all before it in a moment: and particularly, he remembers the pots and caldrons over the fire, which should suffer by it; to intimate, I suppose, that these men were great oppressors, and devoured the people; as the prophets often complain, in that very language, particularly Micah, iii. 2, 3. where you read how the senators of Israel broke the very bones of the poor, and chopped them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Which place affords the best explication that I can find of the ninth verse of this Psalm. Where I take *hai* and *haron* to refer to thorns, and render the former *green*, or alive, the other *dry*, or scorched and burnt. But whatsoever these words signify, the repetition of *chemo* before each of them plainly denotes (to any one that understands the Hebrew language), that the things meant by those words should be served both alike.

Ver. 1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*] From whom may we expect justice, if not from the princes and rulers of the people met together in council? But let me ask that grave assembly, Do you verily think that you have pronounced a righteous sentence against me? Did you judge according to your consciences, uprightly and sincerely; and not suffer yourselves to be biassed by your affections?

Ver. 2. *Yea, in heart you work wickedness; you weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.*] You know the contrary to be true; and that you are not only disposed to do as the king would have you; but have hearts fraught with malice and wicked devices against me: you that ought to weigh things in an even balance, and judge a cause according to its merits, suffer yourselves to be inclined by base respects, to do an open violence to your country, and to oppress the innocent.

Ver. 3. *The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*] But it is no wonder I am thus used by a wicked brood, who never had any sense of God and goodness; but were depraved from the very womb: going astray as soon as they could go; and telling lies as soon as they could speak.

Ver. 4. *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.*] And such is the malignity of their venomous nature, they tell the most malicious and destructive lies of me; which strike at my life as plainly as if they were the poison of a serpent: whom they resemble in this also, that they will not be better instructed, nor, as becomes good judges, keep an ear open to farther information; but are as obstinate as the deaf adder (so much spoken of in our neighbouring countries), which can hear well enough, but stops both her ears.

Ver. 5. *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*] And will not listen to the magical song, wherewith their cunning men are wont to charm those serpents; and draw them together out of their holes.

Ver. 6. *Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord.*] I appeal, therefore, from them unto thee, O God, the most righteous judge; beseeching thee to disable those men's forces, whose wickedness is incorrigible: though they be as strong and terrible, as fierce and ravenous, as the young lions, thou,

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O Lord, who art superior to all, canst easily disarm them, and leave them a desire, without any power, to do me mischief.

Ver. 7. *Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.*] Or if they have any strength remaining, let their courage fail them when they would attempt any thing against me; let them be dissipated like waters which slide away: when Saul bends his mind to do me any harm, let him miss his aim; like him that shoots a broken arrow out of his bow.

Ver. 8. *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away; like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.*] Or be like a snail, that appears with a threatening look when it puts forth its horns; but the farther it goes, the more it wastes and spends itself: whatsoever designs he and his followers may have to destroy me, let them all miscarry and prove like an abortive child, which dies in the womb, and never sees the light of this world.

Ver. 9. *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.*] O ye unrighteous judges; who, instead of preserving the people, devour and eat them up: God shall hurry you away suddenly, as in a furious tempest; which, before your flesh-pots can feel the thorns, carries them all away, both the green thorns and the dry.

Ver. 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*] Which just judgment of God, when innocent people, whom you have oppressed, shall behold, it will fill them with joy; yea, they shall triumph over these wicked men, like a great conqueror; who, returning with an absolute and complete victory from the slaughter of his enemies, dips his feet in their blood, as he passes over their carcasses.

Ver. 11. *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*] And the most vulgar people, who observe little, seeing so remarkable a vengeance, shall confess and say, Surely it is best to be just and pious: surely there is a supreme Judge, whatsoever profane men imagine, who takes notice of all that is done upon earth, and punishes or rewards men according to their desires.

PSALM LIX.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith. Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the House to kill him.

ARGUMENT.

The title sufficiently informs us of the occasion of this Psalm, wherein David expresses what his thoughts and affections were, when Saul sent officers to watch his house all night; and to slay him when he came out of his doors in the morning: as you may read 1 Sam. xix. 11—18. He represents his danger; beseeches God's protection; describes the wickedness of his enemies, and their diligence to destroy him; commends himself to God; expresses his confidence in him; and at last gratefully acknowledges God's goodness, who, by the kindness of his wife, preserved him from this danger. Which was so great, and the deliverance from it so remarkable, that he would have it commemorated in this Psalm: which is therefore called *Michtam;* (see Psal. xvi.) and was sent to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the two former, which have the name *Al-taschith.* (See Psal. lvii.)

Ver. 1. *DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God; defend me from them that rise up against me.*] O God, who hast hitherto graciously preserved me, (see 1 Sam. xix. 10.) take me now into thy protection, and deliver me from this great danger: thou seest the number and the power of my enemies, who are risen up to destroy me; be thou my defence, I beseech thee; and bring me into some place of safety, where they may not be able to reach me.

Ver. 2. *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.*] Rescue me from the malice of men, whose business and constant employment it is to do wickedly: save me from the cruelty of those, whom nothing but my blood will satisfy.

Ver. 3. *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.*] For, lo, a strong guard hath beset my house, and lies in wait to apprehend me, and take away my life: though I have committed no offence against them, either great or less, as thou, O Lord, from whom nothing can be hid, very well knowest.

Ver. 4. *They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.*] Unprovoked by me (I dare again repeat it, so great is my innocence) they very busily run to and fro, and with all diligence dispose their watch in every place to hinder my escape: O that thou wouldest therefore seasonably interpose for my succour, and consider the danger of my condition!

Ver. 5. *Thou therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.*] What is all their power and force to thine? who art the sovereign Lord of the world, and commandest all the hosts in heaven and earth; and hast made also a gracious covenant with thy people, to protect and defend them: appear now for my relief, and punish all those wicked men who call themselves thy people, but are as barbarous and cruel, as false and perfidious, as the heathen: do not spare them, therefore, nor shew any favour to such as violate all the laws of justice and charity, and keep no faith with their neighbours.

Ver. 6. *They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*] After I had escaped the fury of Saul in the day, he renews his attempts in the evening; and sends armed men to apprehend me: (1 Sam. xix. 10, 11.) some of which lie about my house, ready, like a growling dog, to seize upon me; and others (should they miss me there) go round about the city to waylay me in every corner.

Ver. 7. *Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips; for who, say they, doth hear?*] Behold, how full their hearts are of malice! which bursts out at their mouth: they openly threaten to kill me: (1 Sam. xix. 15.) for who, say they, shall call them to any account for it, when they have despatched me?

Ver. 8. *But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*] Thou, O Lord, art not in their thoughts, who wilt so disappoint them in their designs, as to make them very ridiculous: thou wilt expose all these

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paganish people to the scorn and derision of those who see how they are defeated, (1 Sam. xix. 15.)

Ver. 9. *Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.*] For what is the strength of Saul to thee? on whom I will wait with the same diligence, that they watch for me: knowing that I am safer under God's protection, than if my house were an impregnable tower.

Ver. 10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.*] He who hath given me so many demonstrations of his love, will not now desert me; but make way for my timely escape, notwithstanding all their diligence to apprehend me: let them observe me as closely as they can, God will let me behold their disappointment.

Ver. 11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.*] Not that I desire they should all be slain at one stroke, which, though a terrible vengeance, might soon slip out of my countrymen's mind; whose profit I desire, more than my own private revenge: and therefore wish rather thou wouldest employ thy power, O Lord our protector, first to depose them from their honour and high place; and having laid them low, and made them contemptible, then to disperse them here and there, and make them wander up and down as vagabonds; that they may remain every where public spectacles of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 12. *For the sin of their mouth, and the words of their lips, let them even be taken in their pride; and for cursing and lying which they speak.*] The falsehoods and calumnies which their mouths continually utter deserve this vengeance; which shall certainly come upon them: for, though they may thrive by this means for the present, yet at last these very artifices shall prove their ruin: especially since they are so arrogant and audacious, as to dare to forswear themselves, and to confirm their forgeries with oaths and horrid execrations.

Ver. 13. *Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be; and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.*] Let such vile wretches as these, who incense thy just displeasure against them after this manner, be utterly consumed: let them waste away by degrees in their dispersions, till there be none of them found: that they may be convinced there is a supreme Being, and most righteous Judge, who governs all things, and controls even kings themselves, not only among us, but throughout the world.

Ver. 14. *And at evening let them return, and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*] Let them therefore watch me now, as narrowly as they please; (ver. 7.) lying near my house, like a dog, ready to seize upon me; or hunting about the city every where to apprehend me.

Ver. 15. *Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.*] They shall be punished in their kind, and go up and down the city and country hereafter, upon another design: wandering, like a hungry dog, from door to door, to get something to eat; and forced to pass whole nights in complaints for want of satisfaction.

Ver. 16. *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.*] Whilst I (whom they thought to have devoured) am praising thy power, as I intend to do continually; I will get up early, to give thee the highest praises for thy mercy (as I did that morning when I had escaped the hands of those that watched for me), because thou didst so mightily defend me, and take me into thy gracious protection; when I was in such a strait, that without thy miraculous mercy I must have perished.

Ver. 17. *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*] It is but just that I should praise thee (who didst inspire me with strength and courage) with the same diligence that I prayed to thee, against the power of Saul, (ver. 9.) For, whosoever was the instrument, it was God that brought me to a place of safety; that God, who hath been most merciful to me, and tied me unto him by innumerable benefits.

PSALM LX.

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-Naharaim, and with Aram-Zobah; when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, we learn by the title, was penned by David after Saul's persecution was ended by death; and David not only ruled over Judah, but Israel also. Till which time the Philistines and other nations afflicted the country very much, by reason of the divisions there were between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah: as they had done also all the days of Saul, while he was busying himself in pursuing his hatred against David; and neglected his foreign enemies so much, that the Philistines were too hard for him, and at last overthrew him in that great battle wherein he and his sons were slain, (1 Sam. xxxi.) But when David was come to the crown, and both kingdoms also united in him, God himself seemed to lift up an ensign to them, (as he speaks here, ver. 4.) to call them to resort with one consent unto David, in assured hope of victory over their enemies. Accordingly he subdued the Philistines, as you read 2 Sam. viii. 1. (which chapter must be read for the understanding of this Psalm), and after that smote the Moabites, ver. 2. of that chapter; and then, in a memorable battle (particularly taken notice of in the title of this Psalm), overthrew the Syrians, called here and in other places Aram: both those that lived between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, called Naharaim; and those that adjoined to them, in that part of Syria, called Zobah, (ver. 3, &c.)

And returning from this victory, after his lieutenant-general Abishai had slain of the Edomites eighteen thousand, (2 Sam. viii. 13. 1 Chron. xviii. 12.) Joab, the general of all his forces, fell upon them again, and killed in the same place, the Valley of Salt, twelve thousand more (as the title of this Psalm informs us), and afterward destroyed them entirely, leaving never a male-child, that he could find, remaining, (1 Kings xi. 15, 16.)

For all which expeditions, when David was preparing himself, he composed this Psalm, and delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung upon an instrument of six strings, which was wont to be used in solemn thanksgivings (and therefore called *Shushan-eduth*). For he nothing doubted, but God would prosper his arms

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better than he had done Saul's; and both give him the victory over their forces in the field, and bring him also into their fortified cities, (ver. 9.) as we read he did, 2 Sam. viii. 14. Which made this Psalm also be called *Michtam of David;* (see Psal. xvi.) being a most precious memorial, worthy to be ever preserved, of his faith in God, and of the admirable success of it, whereby posterity should learn to trust in him.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.*] O God, the judge of all the world, who hast lately rejected us, and refused to go out with our armies; who hast broken and scattered our forces, (1 Sam. xxxi. 1. 7.) so highly had our sins provoked thy displeasure; I most humbly beseech thee to return to us with thy favour, and make us as prosperous as we have been unsuccessful.

Ver. 2. *Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.*] There have been dreadful commotions among ourselves, and miserable rents and divisions, (2 Sam. ii. 9, 10. 17. iii. 1.) the woful effects of which remain to this day, and call for thy help; who alone canst repair the breaches our folly hath made, and perfect the union which is begun.

Ver. 3. *Thou hast shewed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.*] Thou hast made us feel what it is to offend thee, by inflicting grievous punishments upon us, wherein thou hast fulfilled the words of thy servant Moses; (Deut. xxviii. 18. 34.) for we have been like to men bereft of the use of their reason by some intoxicating potion, and have madly destroyed one another.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.*] But now thou hast granted the desires of those that devoutly worship thee, and, according to thy faithful promise, (2 Sam. iii. 9. 18.) given me to them to be their king; to whom they should all repair, as soldiers do to their ensign when it is lifted up, and unanimously fight against their enemies under my conduct.

Ver. 5. *That thy beloved may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and hear me.*] Which I beseech thee to bless and prosper; that by the mighty power accompanying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from those that have oppressed them.

Ver. 6. *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*] Why should I doubt of it? And not rather rejoice in assured hope of victory; since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said, He will deliver them by my hand, (2 Sam. iii. 18.) and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2.) of all the country about Samaria, which I will distribute under such officers as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver.*] Gilead also and Manasseh, who were lately under another king, (2 Sam. ii. 9.) have submitted themselves unto me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority: these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are now united to the royal tribe of Judah, which (according to the word of our forefather, Gen. xlix. 10.) supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom.

Ver. 8. *Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.*] Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country; for I will tread Moab under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude; (2 Sam. viii. 2.) I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves, (ver. 14.) The Philistines likewise, whom I have begun to smite, (2 Sam. v. 17, &c. 22, &c.) shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to meet me as their conquering lord, (2 Sam. viii. 1.)

Ver. 9. *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*] These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, By what power or force shall I enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? who is it that will conduct me into Idumea, and make me master of it?

Ver. 10. *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*] But I can soon answer myself; for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might? who formerly indeed didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies; but now, I hope, wilt graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

Ver. 11. *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*] Do not frustrate these hopes; but afford us thy help against the Syrians also, (2 Sam. viii. 5.) now that they distress us; for no human force is able to deliver us, nor have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

Ver. 12. *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts; for God will utterly rout our enemies, and tread them down like mire in the streets.

PSALM LXI.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

All agree that, in the beginning of this Psalm, David relates what his thoughts were, when he fled either from Saul or from his son Absalom; who drove him over Jordan, as far as Mahanaim, the very extremity of Judea. Of this latter, it is most probable, he complains here; (ver. 2.) because afterward he calls himself king, (ver. 6.) which he would not have done during the life of Saul, though he was anointed, and designed by God to that high dignity; because nothing could have justified Saul's persecution of him so much as his taking upon him that title. It may be said, indeed, that he kept this Psalm private till he was possessed of the kingdom, and then delivered it to the chief musician, to be sung as Psalm iv. But that will not seem so likely, when we consider that his danger was over before he had finished this Psalm, and called himself a king, as appears from the latter part of it, beginning ver. 5.: where, after a pause, he begins to acknowledge how God had granted the desires he made when he was in distress; and thankfully commemorates his mercy in bringing him back again to his tabernacle: hoping he would prolong his life in the throne, (ver. 6.) to which he

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was newly either advanced, or restored by God's goodness. I shall suppose the latter in my Paraphrase.

Ver. 1. *HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*] O God, the supreme governor and judge of all the world, graciously vouchsafe to admit and answer the petitions of a poor supplicant, who, in a most lamentable condition, cries unto thee most earnestly for relief.

Ver. 2. *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*] Of which I will not despair, though I am upon the brink of being thrust out of my kingdom, (2 Sam. xvii. 22. 24.) and in such anxiety of mind, that I am even overwhelmed with fear, and grief, and care; still I cry unto thee, saying, Secure me, I beseech thee, and bring me into a place of safety; which as without thee I am not able to reach, so there my enemies may not be able to approach me.

Ver. 3. *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*] For in all my distresses hitherto, thou hast been pleased wonderfully to preserve me: I fled to thee, and was protected, as in an impregnable fortress, when Saul sought to destroy me.

Ver. 4. *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*] Which makes me hope thou wilt restore me again to the place where thou dwellest; and that I shall never be thus banished from it any more, but remain in safety under thy almighty protection, in which I will put my entire confidence.

Ver. 5. *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.*] And since thou, O God, hast heard the prayers, which with these vows I made unto thee; and hast given me again the possession of that country, which is the inheritance of thy faithful people:

Ver. 6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life; and his years as many generations.*] I doubt not but thou wilt grant their king a long and prosperous reign over them, and add so many years to those which his enemies would have cut off: as if thou hadst given him a new life, and added another age unto the former.

Ver. 7. *He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*] He shall sit upon his throne, and ever govern in the fear of God: O that thy goodness and faithfulness, which are a stronger guard than all his military forces, may be ever ready at hand to defend him!

Ver. 8. *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*] So will I perpetually sing psalms in praise of them; and learn thereby to be faithful to my promises: and day by day perform the vows which I made unto thee when I was in trouble.

PSALM LXII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

There are no petitions at all in this Psalm, nor any thanksgivings, but only expressions of David's faith and confidence in God. Which (notwithstanding the straits he was in, as appears from ver. 3, 4.) grew greater and stronger, (compare ver. 2. with ver. 6.) and moved him to earnest exhortations of all other persons, never to trust in men; much less in those wicked arts of fraudulent dealing and robbery, whereby men are wont to advance themselves to great estates; hoping thereby to be so strong, that nobody dare meddle with them: but to place all their confidence in God alone, who can and will make those supports fail those that rely upon them, and bless the piety of such men as depend wholly upon him.

Which would make one think this Psalm was penned by him when he had overcome all the fears into which the rebellion of Absalom at first put him; but yet was not restored to his kingdom. Unto which when he returned, he committed this meditation to the master of the music, to be sung according to the tune to which Jeduthun, a famous artist, had set the thirty-ninth Psalm.

Ver. 1. *TRULY my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*] Let the dangers be never so great which threaten my destruction, I am resolved quietly and patiently to submit myself to God; expecting what he will be pleased to do for me, who alone is able to deliver me.

Ver. 2. *He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.*] Be my enemies never so powerful, I doubt not by his providence to be safe; so secure, that though they give me some disturbance, they shall not be able to do it long, much less to throw me quite out of my throne.

Ver. 3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*] I wonder at your obstinacy, who continue thus to contrive the ruin of a man, whom God hath so visibly declared that he favours: to what purpose are all your conspiracies, but only to bring sudden destruction upon yourselves? for you shall all perish in this enterprise, and fall to the ground, like a wall that is not evenly built; or like a partition made only of loose stones, that have no mortar to cement and hold them fast together.

Ver. 4. *They only consult to cast him down from his excellency; they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.*] It is plain what they design, and whither all their consultations tend; to dethrone him whom God hath been pleased to advance to the highest dignity: this they hope now to effect by lies and calumnies; in which they please themselves, as formerly they did in fawning and flattery: speaking fairly to me with their mouth, when in their heart they wished my utter ruin. (See Psal. lv. 21.)

Ver. 5. *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.*] But let not this discourage thee, O my soul; resolve still to wait upon God with quietness and patience: for from him I expect my deliverance.

Ver. 6. *He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.*] By his providence, as I said before, I doubt not I shall be so safe, so secure, that, do what they can, they shall not be able to take one step more to throw me out of my throne.

Ver. 7. *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*] Both my safety, and my honour, and dignity, depend upon God alone; and not upon their will and pleasure: and I trust not either in

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fortresses or armies, but make him my confidence, on whom I rely for defence and protection against the strongest enemies.

Ver. 8. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.*] And so I would advise all my people to do continually, in whatsoever condition you be, repose a pious confidence in him: be not fearful, nor too solicitous; but commit yourselves to God by earnest prayer, and implore his help; for he will never fail us.

Ver. 9. *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*] But do not place any confidence in man; for as the multitude are vain, giddy, and unconstant, so the greater sort are false, deceitful, and treacherous: take them altogether, they are no more to be depended on than the vainest thing in the world; which, thrown into the balance against them, will prove more solid and ponderous.

Ver. 10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*] And do not by any means, when all human helps may fail you, betake yourselves to frauds, cheating, and calumnies, for support; much less endeavour to enrich yourselves by rapine, spoil, and robbery. Be not so vain as to trust to ill-gotten goods; for if your riches increase by honest means, they are not things wherein to place either your confidence and hope, or your love and joy.

Ver. 11. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.*] For God hath frequently declared, in the course of his providence, as well as in his word; I myself have been witness of it more than once; that by his power he disposes things quite otherways than men project; dashing all their worldly confidences in pieces, and especially defeating the hopes of those that think to prosper in evil courses.

Ver. 12. *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*] And that thou, O Lord, art also exceeding gracious to those that piously trust in thee; preserving and providing for them, when they are destitute of human succour: for thou art not an idle spectator of men's actions, nor acceptest any man's person; but an exact dispenser of rewards and punishments, to every man according to his work.

PSALM LXIII.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, the title informs us, represents the thoughts which David had when he was in the wilderness of Judah. But whether by that he meant the forest of Hareth, wherein, after other places, he secured himself when he fled from Saul; (1 Sam. xxii. 5.) or the wilderness he went through, when he fled from Absalom, (2 Sam. xvii. 29.) may be questioned. Theodoret takes it for the former; but I incline to the latter, for the same reason I gave before; because he calls himself a king, (ver. 11.) which he would not have done, as I said, (upon Psal. lxi.) during the reign of Saul; because it would have given him too just cause to persecute him; and made the people look upon him as a traitor. Unless we say that he did not publish this Psalm, but reserved it for his own private use, till he came to the kingdom. When he delivered it to the chief musician, for the service of the tabernacle: where he longed very much to be, when he was in his banishment. As appears by this Psalm; in which he expresses exceeding great love to God (as Theodoret notes), and predicts the destruction of his enemies.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*] O God, the governor of the world, who hast ever been my gracious God, and art my only confidence; to thee I early direct my morning thoughts, most earnestly beseeching thee to take pity upon me, in this desolate condition: wherein I languish, and am ready to faint, as I travel through this dry and tiresome wilderness, (2 Sam. xvii. 29.) where there is no water to refresh me.

Ver. 2. *To see thy power, and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*] It is not so much some satisfaction to my hunger and thirst that I desire, as to be restored again to worship thee before the ark of thy presence; (2 Sam. xv. 25.) which is the token of thy power and majesty residing among us: and there to enjoy thee, as I have done heretofore; when I had the liberty to go into thy sanctuary.

Ver. 3. *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*] My lips shall then praise thee with the same devotion that I now pray unto thee: for nothing is so dear unto me as thy favour and love; without which, life itself, and all the pleasures of my court, would be of little value.

Ver. 4. *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*] The greatest pleasure of my life shall be continually to bless thee for such a happy restoration; and with the most thankful acknowledgments for what thou hast done for me, to implore thy future kindness towards me.

Ver. 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*] My hungry appetite would not now receive greater satisfaction, if the best cheer in the world was presented to me; than my soul shall be filled withal in that sweet employment: when, with the highest expressions of joy, my mouth shall, with a loud voice, sing thy praises.

Ver. 6. *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.*] Meantime, I comfort myself with the hope of that happiness; calling to mind, as I lie upon my bed, and seriously considering, as oft as I awake, how gracious thou hast been unto me.

Ver. 7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*] From whence I conclude, that since thou hast relieved me in my greatest straits, I shall be safe under thy almighty protection; and at last triumph over all my enemies.

Ver. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*] Though thou seemest to cast me off, my soul notwithstanding cleaveth fast unto thee, and will not part with its hope in thee: and I feel the happy fruit of it; for by thy mighty aid I am supported and preserved from sinking under these sore calamities that have lain upon me.

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Ver. 9. *But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.*] Which now shall fall upon those that endeavour to destroy me: who, seeking to take away my life, shall lose their own, (2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8, &c.)

Ver. 10. *They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes.*] They shall perish by the sword; and their carcasses have no other sepulchres but in the bowels of foxes, and other such-like ravenous creatures, who live as they do, by stealth and deceit.

Ver. 11. *But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*] But I, their sovereign, shall be filled with joy; and so shall all pious men, who preserved their loyalty, and would by no means violate their oath, wherein they stood engaged to me: they shall triumph when my calumniators, (2 Sam. xv. 2, 3.) and all perfidious persons, shall be so silenced, that they shall not have a word to say for themselves.

PSALM LXIV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The enemy of whom David here complains, it is most probable, was Saul: whose hatred to him was very much heightened, and made more malignant, by the calumnies and false stories which were told of him by some ill men in his court: who were always plotting and contriving in their cabals (as we speak), how to compass his destruction (and found no means more effectual for that end than lies and calumnies); though, in truth, they were all that time (as he foretold) devising their own. In memory of which he delivered this Psalm, together with several other (which he made on the same subject), to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle.

Ver. 1. *HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*] O God, the governor of all the world, who seest the danger I am in by a dreadful enemy; be thou my friend, I humbly beseech thee; and preserve the life of thy persecuted servant, who by earnest prayer commends himself unto thy custody.

Ver. 2. *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.*] Protect me from the secret plots, and the open violence of those wicked men who make a great stir against me, and unjustly seek my ruin.

Ver. 3. *Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*] Their tongue is their principal weapon; which they have in readiness (as soldiers have their swords) upon all occasions, to wound my reputation: calumnies and slanders, like so many poisoned arrows, are ever at their tongues' end:

Ver. 4. *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*] Which, when they are in private with Saul, they shoot at me; who never did him or them any wrong; but am perfectly guiltless of that which they charge me withal: yet I find these false accusations, which I never expected, spread abroad by those who have no fear of God to restrain them from doing mischief to their innocent neighbours.

Ver. 5. *They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?*] They use their utmost endeavours to make their calumnies be believed, and confirm one another in their resolved prosecution of their wicked design: which they consult how to effect, though it be by falsehood and treachery, or by wiles and crafty practices, so subtly contrived, that nobody, they hope, shall be able to discover them.

Ver. 6. *They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and their heart, is deep.*] They employ all their wit and diligence in these wicked devices: and leave nothing unattempted to produce the most exquisite and absolute piece of villany that can be invented by men of the deepest reach and policy.

Ver. 7. *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.*] But all to no purpose; for, when they little think of it, they and all their projects shall perish, by a sudden stroke of the Divine vengeance.

Ver. 8. *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*] Their slanders shall reflect upon themselves; and their wicked counsels prove so pernicious to those that gave them, that they shall be forsaken even of their friends; and they that were wont to visit them, shall fly away from them.

Ver. 9. *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God: for they shall wisely consider of his doing.*] And all other men shall be afraid to imitate them; not being able to deny the just vengeance of God, the judge of all, upon them: for they shall be convinced that it was not by chance, but by his counsel, that they were not only defeated, but ensnared in their own contrivances.

Ver. 10. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*] Which shall both fill my heart, whom they unjustly maligned, with such joy in the Lord, as shall encourage me to commit myself unto him for ever in well-doing; and make all true lovers of piety triumph in the victory, which integrity and simplicity have gotten over falsehood and subtilty.

PSALM LXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm and Song of David.

ARGUMENT.

The latter part of this excellent Hymn of Praise (as the title calls it; see more, Psal. lxvii.) hath moved some judicious interpreters to think, that it was delivered by David to the master of music, after some great drought; which had brought, or threatened to bring, a dearth upon the land: and there are those who imagine it relates to the three years' famine after the rebellion of Absalom, (2 Sam. xxi.) which being removed by plentiful showers of rain, the Psalmist gives God public thanks in this Hymn for sending them seasonably to his people; whom he had formerly obliged by several other great benefits, as he doth all other nations; which David here first of all commemorates.

I can find nothing more probable than this. For as to the title which we find in the Vulgar Latin, out of some Greek copies, that it is *a Psalm sung by Jeremy and Ezekiel, with the people of the captivity, when they were about*

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to go into, or come out of it (I know not well which they mean); there is no sense that I can see to be made of it. For Jeremiah was not carried captive, as Theodoret observes, but left at liberty to go whither he pleased; and Ezekiel was gone long before: nor are there any such words, as the same Theodoret notes, to be found either in the Hebrew, or in other interpreters; no, not in the LXX. which was in the Hexaplus. But somebody, who neither attended to the sense of the Psalm (as he passes his censure), nor understood the history, added this inscription. Yet he himself thinks it was spoken by them in captivity, when, far from their own land, they longed to sing God's praises; but could not do it publicly in Babylon; and therefore prayed God, in the words of this Hymn, to turn their captivity, and to bring them again to Zion; which I know not how to contradict: but seeing no proof of it, I shall not meddle with that sense in my Paraphrase.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*] It becomes us, O God, above all other people, to praise thee in thy sanctuary (though we cannot worthily express, but must rather silently adore, thy incomparable excellences), and to pay the vows which we made unto thee in the time of our distress.

Ver. 2. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*] And more especially to magnify thy clemency in hearing my prayer, (2 Sam. xxi. 1.) which may invite all mankind, even those that are most miserable, to make their addresses unto thee.

Ver. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*] Nor need their sins discourage them; for thou hadst matter enough of that kind against me to have hindered the prevalency of my prayer, if thou hadst charged my iniquities upon me: but thou hast been graciously pleased to forgive not only me, but all thy people their transgressions, whereby they have provoked thee.

Ver. 4. *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*] O how happy is the condition of a priest, or a Levite, whom thou hast chosen to minister before thee; and hath the privilege to be continually employed in thy service! Though we cannot all be so blessed, yet, such is thy goodness, we enjoy most sweet refreshments in thy house, when we offer our prayers and praises to thee; and taste of the sacrifices of thanksgiving, which we there present for the benefits we have received from thee.

Ver. 5. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.*] Who hast done wonderful and astonishing things for us, out of thy mere mercy and bounty, when in our necessity we implored thy help, O God; who not only marvellously savest and deliverest us in this nation from destruction, but art the support and safeguard of all mankind in the remotest parts of the earth, or islands of the sea.

Ver. 6. *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power.*] For God's power, which is ready at all times to execute his pleasure, is not inferior to his mercy; but hath settled the mountains in their places, and sustains their vast weight from sinking down into the earth.

Ver. 7. *Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*] Against which, when the sea beats tempestuously, he composes and silences its swelling and roaring waves: as he doth, with the same ease, the rage and fury of the people, when, by the breath of unquiet, seditious spirits, they rise up tumultuously, and break out into rebellion.

Ver. 8. *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*] The most barbarous people, who live in the remotest corners of the earth, behold with wonder and amazement the heavenly bodies, which thou hast appointed for signs and tokens; (Gen. i. 14.) by the rising of the sun, the moon, and stars, in the morning and evening, thou fillest them with joy, as well as admiration.

Ver. 9. *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.*] But we are more particularly bound unto thee; whose land, which was lately visited with drought, thou hast now refreshed and enriched with such liberal showers out of the clouds (which, like a vast river, are never exhausted), as have made it exceeding fruitful; for from thence thou hast ordained it should be constantly replenished.

Ver. 10. *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof.*] And, accordingly, when the ground is ploughed up, thou sendest abundance of rain upon its ridges, which settle the clods, and make them sink down upon the seed that is newly sown: and when the ground grows too hard, and hinders its sprouting forth, thou softenest and openest it with gentle showers, which bring up the blade; and that thy blessing makes to prosper and thrive, till it grow up into corn.

Ver. 11. *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.*] Thus thy goodness hath made this a most plentiful year, and magnificently adorned it with variety of fruits: for thy clouds have wheeled about, and every where distilled a fattening juice into the earth.

Ver. 12. *They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side.*] They have made green pastures even in desolate places; and the little hills, which before looked ruefully, appear now most beautiful; and have, as it were, put on the garments of joy and gladness.

Ver. 13. *The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.*] The pastures, which were bare before, are clothed now with flocks, as they are with grass; the fields also are so covered with corn, that the face of the earth cannot be seen: they keep a kind of festival, which hath filled us all with an universal mirth, and made us triumph in thy goodness.

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PSALM LXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Song or Psalm.

ARGUMENT.

The Vulgar Latin here again (so little trust is to be given to it) hath an inscription, which, as Theodoret witnesses, is not to be found in other interpreters, no more than in the Hebrew; no, not in the Septuagint translation, which was in the famous Hexaplus. Nor can any good reason be given why they call it, *A Song-Psalm concerning the Resurrection;* unless thereby we understand the resurrection of the dry bones, of which Ezekiel prophesied, chap. xxxvii. which was the bringing the people in Babylon, where they seem to be buried, to their own land again, ver. 12. And so Theodoret himself takes it for a Psalm which David, by a prophetical spirit, composed for the people in captivity, not praying for their return (as he fancies they do in the Psalm foregoing), but upon their way home, and praising God for their liberty.

Certain it is this Psalm was made after a very remarkable deliverance from some sore calamity, under which the nation had groaned. And it not being said by whom it was penned, nor who the enemies were that oppressed them, it is generally thought not to be David's, whose name it doth not bear in the title, as the foregoing does; but to have been made by some holy man after, or in their return from, the forementioned captivity. But he that collected the Psalms contained in this second book, though he did not find David's name in the front of it; yet took him, I believe, to be the author both of this and of the next Psalm, as well as of the foregoing: otherwise he would not have placed them between those on both sides which certainly belong to him, when he intended, it appears by the conclusion of this book, (lxxii. 20.) to put together all the prayers that he had then met withal of David's. He that considers also that the seventy-first and seventy-second Psalms have not David's name in the title, and yet are generally thought to be of his composing, will not take the want of the usual inscription here to be a sufficient argument why we should seek for some other author of this Psalm.

Which was penned, I judge, after God had advanced David to the throne, and peaceably settled him in his kingdom. Till which time they had been in a very unsettled condition, not only during the rule of the judges (when, as he speaks here, ver. 12. many of their neighbours *rid over their heads*, or, as we now speak, domineered over them as they pleased), but also in the reign of Saul, when the Philistines were so powerful, that the Israelites durst not look them in the face, but hid themselves in caves, and thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits, (1 Sam. xiii. 6.) For they had disarmed them; so that when they came to fight, there was not a man had a sword or a spear but only Saul and Jonathan, (ver. 22.) And though they prevailed over the Philistines afterward in several battles, (chap. xiv. xvii.) yet they grew so strong again, that they penetrated into the country as far as Mount Gilboa, where Saul and his sons were slain; (chap. xxxi.) and the people thereupon were so dismayed, that they about Jordan forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them, (ver. 7.) To these things the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses of this Psalm may have respect. And then the freeing the country from that oppression, and forcing those insolent enemies to submit to David (ver. 3. where there is the same expression in substance with that which he uses, Psal. xviii. 45. after he had overcome all his enemies), may be the thing for which he here gives praise to God: exciting all the country to join with him in blessing his Divine Majesty; not only for this, but for former deliverances he had vouchsafed to that nation. Which he would have acknowledged with their most cheerful thanksgivings, (which may be the meaning of a *Song-Psalm*, see lxvii.) especially in the public service of God at the tabernacle. Into which he promises to go, ver. 13. 14. (a sign the Psalm was not made at their coming out of Babylon, when there was no house to go unto) and pay his vows, which he had made before these victories. But at their return from Babylon it is likely they might use this Psalm, and apply it to that purpose, going to the place where the house of God formerly stood.

Ver. 1. *MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands.*] Let all the people of this land shout aloud, and triumph in the liberty which God hath restored unto us.

Ver. 2. *Sing forth the honour of his name; make his praise glorious.*] Sing psalms in honour of his most glorious majesty; and do not merely praise him, but do it in the most splendid manner: and place your principal glory in this, that you have the honour to sing his praises.

Ver. 3. *Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.*] Saying, O God, thy stupendous works fill us with wonder and amazement; but we are not able to express the greatness of them: they strike terror into the hearts of thy enemies, who, feeling the dreadful effects of thy power, dare not oppose thee any longer, but, dissembling their hostility, shall come and offer thee their service, (2 Sam. viii. 1.)

Ver. 4. *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.*] For which be thou adored by all the inhabitants of this country: let them all sing joyful hymns unto thee; let them sing the praise of thy power, which hath thus daunted our enemies, and delivered us.

Ver. 5. *Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing towards the children of men.*] Approach, I beseech you, and attentively consider what our God hath done, and then I need not exhort you to praise his name: for the works and counsels of his providence over all mankind are very astonishing.

Ver. 6. *He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in him.*] Especially over us, for whose fathers, to their unspeakable joy, (Exod. xv.) he opened a passage through the Red Sea, when they were so shut up between that before, and the army of Pharaoh behind, that there was no way left for their escape, (Exod. xiv. 16.) And also led them dryshod through the river Jordan, when it was so full of water, that it overflowed its banks, (Josh. iii. 15—17.) which created a new joy in the hearts of our nation.

Ver. 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold*

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the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.] And it ought to continue still in succeeding ages, since the same Divine Power which did those wonders governs the world throughout all generations: he sees and observes the motions of all nations, who may learn, by the Egyptians and Canaanites, that they, who contemn his authority, in vain endeavour to exalt themselves to greater eminence; for they shall certainly be abased.

Ver. 8. *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.*] We have reason to say, that he is our God, and takes care of us, as well as of those before us; and therefore let all the tribes of Israel agree together to bless him, and proclaim his praises; that it may be for ever known how good he is, and how grateful they are.

Ver. 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*] For he hath wonderfully preserved us from perishing in our affliction: and not suffered our enemies to pursue their advantages to our utter overthrow and ruin.

Ver. 10. *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*] Thou hast proved our constancy, indeed, O God, by most severe chastisements; and as a refiner tries his silver by throwing it into the fire, so thou hast dealt with us as well as with our forefathers; whose labours in the iron furnace of Egypt we have been forced to imitate under our oppressors.

Ver. 11. *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidest affliction upon our loins.*] Our enemies have pursued us, and brought us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits, (1 Sam. xiii. 6.) They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us; which they have fast bound upon our backs, (ver. 19, 20.)

Ver. 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*] Thou hast made us slaves to the vilest of men, who exercise the most insolent tyranny over us: we have endured variety of the sorest miseries; and yet, such is thy goodness, thou hast carried us through them all; and at last brought us into a state of perfect liberty, ease, and plenteous prosperity.

Ver. 13. *I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows.*] I will go therefore into thy house, and give a good example to all my people: for I will not present myself before thee with empty praises; but acknowledge thy benefits with burnt-offerings, and faithfully discharge the vows wherein I stand engaged.

Ver. 14. *Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.*] Which I was not more forward to make with open mouth when I was in distress, than I will be to perform with all solemnity now that thou hast graciously delivered me out of it.

Ver. 15. *I will offer unto thee burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams: I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.*] For as I will not come empty into thy house; so I will not bring thee a niggardly present: but offer sacrifices of all sorts; and the best and choicest in every kind.

Ver. 16. *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*] And together therewith I will make a thankful commemoration of his loving-kindness (which is the most acceptable sacrifice), and let all pious men know (O that they would come and hearken to me while I relate!) how good God hath been unto me.

Ver. 17. *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*] For the ardent prayers which I made unto him, in a very low condition, are now turned into the highest praises of his powerful goodness; whereby I am advanced unto a throne.

Ver. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*] Which hath brought along with it a testimony of my sincerity; far more valuable than my kingdom: for if I had been guilty of any such crimes, or entertained so much as a thought of them, as my enemies charged me withal; the Lord, who hates iniquity, would have denied me my request.

Ver. 19. *But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*] Which now sure you all see he hath graciously granted; and thereby cleared my innocence from all the aspersions that were cast upon me.

Ver. 20. *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*] To the praise of God's infinite goodness be it spoken (not of my own righteousness), who did not reject my prayer; but vouchsafed me the mercy which I desired.

PSALM LXVII.

To the chief Musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm or Song.

ARGUMENT.

This excellent Psalm, all agree, hath the same author with the former; which I have made it probable (see Psal. lxvi.) was composed by David; who, being settled in his throne after miserable confusions, and having brought the ark to Jerusalem, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, (as he promised in the Psalm foregoing, ver. 15.) blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts; (2 Sam. vi. 17, 18.) pronounced, that is, this Psalm (as I conjecture), wherein he manifestly imitates that form of blessing, which the priests were appointed to use on solemn occasions; (as you may read Numb. vi. 23—25.) beseeching God to continue his favour to them, and to make them such an example of his loving-kindness, that it might invite all nations, to whom the fame of it should come, to submit themselves unto his government.

It is no argument against this, to say, that he doth not bless them here in the name of the Lord; which is used in the blessing which Moses taught them. For it is certain he alludes, in the beginning of the next Psalm, to the form of prayer used at the setting forward of the ark, (Numb. x. 35.) and yet there also he uses the word *Elohim* instead of *Jehovah*, as he doth in this Psalm; which he delivered afterward to the master of music, to be sung as the fourth Psalm.

But what difference there is between a *Song-Psalm* and a *Psalm-Song* (in which the titles of the fifty-fifth and of this and the next differ from the foregoing, as the title of the thirtieth doth from the forty-eighth), I am not able certainly to resolve. For some think that a *Psalm-Song*, or *Psalm of a Song*, began with voices, the musical instruments following after; and a *Song-Psalm*, or *Song of a Psalm*, began with instruments, the voices following after: others give a quite contrary account; for, taking a *Psalm* to be properly the sound of instruments (whereof there were six or seven sorts), and a *Song* to be the voice of singers; they will have a *Psalm-Song* to be that where,

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the sound of instruments preceding, the singing voices followed; and a *Song-Psalm* that where, the voices preceding, the instrumental music followed. But Kimchi ingenuously confesses, in his preface to the Book of Psalms, that their nation can give no account of such-like things, which we meet with in the title of the Psalms.

Ver. 1. *GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.*] Be gracious unto us, O God, and complete the happiness which thy almighty goodness hath begun to bestow upon us; let us not fall again into those dismal calamities, out of which thou hast delivered us; but declare thou lovest us, by continuing thy gracious presence with us.

Ver. 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*] That the fame of thy wonderful providence over us, and of the deliverances thou workest for us, being spread not only here in this country, but throughout all other nations; they may be moved thereby to acknowledge and worship thee as the only God.

Ver. 3. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*] O that we might see that happy day; O that the people would confess and praise thee, O God; that all the people every where, with one consent, would confess and praise thee.

Ver. 4. *O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.*] O that the nations were so sensible what a happiness it is to be under thy care, that they might rejoice and shout for joy, to know that thou art the governor of the world! who by thy power oppressest none, but distributest equal justice unto all; and graciously providest for the welfare of those who become thy subjects, and commit themselves unto thy conduct.

Ver. 5. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*] We cannot often enough wish to see them so happy; but must again and again repeat our desires, that the people would confess thee, O God, to be the Lord of all: that all the people every where would, with one consent, celebrate thee with their praises, and confess that thou alone canst make them happy.

Ver. 6. *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*] As thou dost us, whose land of late hath been so exceeding fruitful, (2 Sam. vi. 19.) that we may look upon it as an earnest of future blessings: which may it please our good God, whose people we are by peculiar covenant, to multiply upon us.

Ver. 7. *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*] With this prayer let us conclude as we began, that God would be pleased still to pour down his benefits upon us: that so the people, who live in the remotest parts of the earth, may all devoutly worship and serve him.

PSALM LXVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm or Song of David.

ARGUMENT.

David having brought the ark to Jerusalem with a great deal of joy and triumph, (2 Sam. vi.) after it had been long neglected in the reign of Saul, (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) which was one cause, it is like, that he had no better success against his foreign enemies; hoped God would be more propitious to him, according to the prayer he had made in the foregoing Psalm. For now he had (to repair that negligence of Saul) not only brought the ark near to his own palace, in the chief city of the kingdom, but prepared a noble place for its reception, (2 Sam. vi. 16. 2 Chron. i. 4.) which it had been a long time without. For ever since its falling into the hands of the Philistines, (1 Sam. iv. 11.) it had been separated from the tabernacle of the congregation built for it by Moses, which was God's habitation or dwelling-place; and after the destruction of Shiloh was removed to Nob, (1 Sam. xxi. 1.) and from thence, after Doeg had slain the priests, to Gibeon, where it remained till the building of Solomon's temple. All which time, it is manifest, it had no ark of God's presence in it, for that was in Kirjath-jearim, (1 Sam. vii. 1.) from whence David fetched it (1 Chron. xiii. 5.) to Mount Zion; where he having made a tabernacle for its entertainment, the Lord God might be said (as we render it, ver. 18. of this Psalm) to *dwell among them*, with an intention not to remove from thence (as the ark had done before) to any other mountain, (ver. 16.) And, indeed, here he dwelt more magnificently than he had done before, and was more royally attended and solemnly served; David appointing, a little before he died, (as he had begun to do before, 1 Chron. xvi.) the priests and Levites, in their courses, constantly to wait upon him, with songs and instruments of music; and settling all other officers belonging to a house, and suitable to the greatness of the majesty that dwelt there, (1 Chron. xxiii.—xxvi.)

Which honour being done to God, he hoped, as I said, that God would favour him in his enterprises better than he had done Saul, who took care of no such matters. And being shortly to engage some potent enemies, (2 Sam. viii.) he earnestly begs the presence of God with him (of which the ark was a token) in this excellent Psalm. And he begs in that very form of words, (ver. 1.) which Moses had directed the priests to use every time that they took up the ark, to set forward in their march to the land of Canaan, (Numb. x. 35.) Upon which occasion he calls to mind what wonders God had done for them in leading them by the ark of his presence through the wilderness into their good land. Where he hoped he would establish and settle his people, now that he had, in so pompous and triumphant a manner, ascended into the high hill of Zion, (out of which David had expelled the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6.) and, by his special direction and conduct, already given them such great victories over the Philistines, their mortal enemies, (2 Sam. v. 19. 23.) that it was an emblem of the far more glorious ascension of the Lord Christ, after he had overcome death itself, the last and greatest enemy of mankind, into the highest heavens. Of the title of the Psalm, see lxvii.

Ver. 1. *LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.*] O that God, who by his powerful presence conducted his people, in spite of all opposers, into this land, (Numb. x. 35.) would now graciously appear to disperse and put to flight those numerous armies, which, out of mere hatred to him, come to dispossess us of it.

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Ver. 2. *As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*] They are no more able to stand before him, than the smoke (whatsoever show it makes) is to stand before the wind; or the wax (how firm soever it seem) before the fire; but shall be dispelled, and melt away, like those feeble things: just so shall those wicked people perish, if God will be pleased to manifest himself to be among us.

Ver. 3. *But let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*] Which shall fill the hearts of all his faithful servants with joy and gladness: they shall leap for joy before him, (as I lately did when I brought up the ark unto Mount Zion, 2 Sam. vi. 14. 16.) and be so extraordinarily transported, that they shall not find words enough to express the joy they have in his gracious presence with them.

Ver. 4. *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah, and rejoice before him.*] O begin your cheerful hymns unto his majesty; sing the praise of his powerful goodness, and of all the rest of his glorious attributes, whereby he is known to you: magnify him, and prepare a triumphal pomp for him, who turns about even the highest heavens, and rules them at his pleasure: O rejoice exceedingly before him, who hath plainly shewn, by what he hath lately done, that he is the eternal, unchangeable God, who faithfully keeps his promises for ever.

Ver. 5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*] The poorest and meanest persons on earth need not doubt of his patronage; for though he be higher than the highest heavens, yet he hath taken up his dwelling among us; that the fatherless and widows, when they have no helper, may fly unto his fatherly care, and appeal to him as their righteous judge, to redress the wrongs that are done unto them.

Ver. 6. *God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*] God provides for those who are utterly destitute, and settles them in comfortable habitations: he unties the chains of captives, and gives them a happy deliverance; but brings rebellious oppressors into that want and scarcity whereunto they have reduced others.

Ver. 7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah.*] A famous instance of which we saw at our coming out of Egypt; when thou, O God, wentest before thy people, night and day, in a pillar of cloud and fire, (Exod. xiii. 21.) and conductedst them, as their captain, through a barren and dangerous wilderness.

Ver. 8. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*] The earth trembled, yea, the heavens dissolved into thunder, lightning, and rain, (Exod. xix. 16.) when the Divine Majesty descended upon Mount Sinai; the mountain itself quaked (ver. 18.) before his glorious majesty, who is still present with his people Israel.

Ver. 9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.*] For whom, O God, thou didst miraculously provide, by sending them liberal showers in those dry and desert places; and, having chosen them for thy own peculiar people, didst rain down bread from heaven, (Exod. xvi. 4.) to refresh and strengthen them when they were faint and weary.

Ver. 10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*] A vast congregation of people, with their flocks and their herds, found a convenient habitation in that wilderness, by thy bounty, O God; who didst furnish those who were in danger to starve, with all things necessary for them.

Ver. 11. *The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it.*] Yea, the Lord made them so victorious over all those who opposed them, that they still returned from the battle with songs of triumph in their mouths; and a great army of women met them, (according to the custom, Exod. xv. 23, &c.) to join with them in publishing his praises; saying,

Ver. 12. *Kings of armies did flee apace; and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*] The kings and captains of those hosts who thought to have destroyed us were put to flight, (Exod. xvii. Numb. xxi. 2, 3, &c.) They fled away in haste, and left their spoil behind them, to be divided among us, that were too weak to go into the field, (Numb. xxxi. 8. 11. Judg. viii. 21. 26.)

Ver. 13. *Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*] But we welcome home our victorious countrymen with this encouragement, that though you have endured great hardships in Egypt, where you looked not like valiant soldiers, but rather like vile scullions besmutted among kettles and pots, you shall hereafter appear most beautiful and splendid, and the wings of your armies shall shine like those of a dove, when they glisten as if they were covered with silver and gold.

Ver. 14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*] And their word was fulfilled at our entrance into Canaan; when, by scattering all their kings, the Almighty appeared most illustrious as Salmon, and gave us possession of the country on this side Jordan.

Ver. 15. *The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; a high hill, as the hill of Bashan.*] As, on the other side of it, he subdued the country of Og king of Bashan, (Numb. xxi. 33, &c.) which hill became the hill of God; the hill with so many fertile risings, the famous hill of Bashan, became part of his inheritance.

Ver. 16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.*] But do not grow proud of this, ye lofty mountains; for neither the height of Salmon, nor of Bashan, shall invite him there to make his habitation; Zion is the hill which he hath chosen to honour with that favour; yea, there the Lord hath resolved to fix his tabernacle, and never (till the Messiah come) to remove to any other.

Ver. 17. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*] Nor let the heathen brag of the multitude of their chariots, wherein consists their strength; for in Zion there are ten thousand times more innumerable hosts of angels attending upon the Divine Majesty; who is with them there, as he was upon Mount Sinai, which now is in the sanctuary.

Ver. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for*

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the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.] Thou hast declared as much, O God: who art gone up thither, and hast highly exalted thyself by illustrious victories; which through their invisible ministry thou hast given us over our enemies (as the Messiah, who shall be thy sanctuary, will do far more magnificently, when, after the conquest of death, &c. he shall ascend in a bright chariot, Acts i. 9. attended with the heavenly hosts, into the highest heavens, to be exalted at thy right hand), whom by thy aid we have carried away captive, and their spoils together with them, to be distributed among thy people (an emblem of the rich gifts the Messiah shall bestow upon us, and distribute among us, after his ascension); yea, the rebellious opposers of thee in other nations shall become proselytes to dwell with thee, O Lord God, and worship at thy sanctuary (as the gentile world shall, by that effusion of Divine gifts, submit themselves to the Messiah, the Lord God of all the world).

Ver. 19. *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*] Blessed be the Lord, who day by day exercises as tender and careful a providence over us, as a mother over her children: (Isa. xlvi. 3.) that mighty God be blessed, to whom we owe all our deliverances.

Ver. 20. *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.*] And they are very great and very many, which it is not in the power of any other god to bestow, but of him alone that dwells in Zion; who, as the author of all men's being, and their supreme Lord and governor, disposes of their lives, and assigns them what passages he pleases out of the world.

Ver. 21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies; and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*] And certainly God, the righteous judge, will now break in pieces all those enemies that lift up their heads so high, in hope to destroy us: their fierce captain, (2 Sam. viii. 3.) whose shaggy hair makes him look very terribly, shall not escape, if he go on still presumptuously to offend thee.

Ver. 22. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan; I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea.*] Thus the Lord hath determined within himself, saying, I will renew the wonders I wrought in former times; and make my people as victorious over all these mighty armies, as they were over Og the king of Bashan, (Numb. xxi.) and over Pharaoh, when they marched through the Red Sea. (Exod. xv.)

Ver. 23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*] The victory shall be so complete, and such a slaughter made, that thou mayest wade, and thy dogs put their tongues, in the blood that shall flow from those enemies, and from him that leads them.

Ver. 24. *They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*] For thy people, O God, have seen to their joy, and thy enemies to their terror, what a solemn entrance thou madest (by the ark of thy presence), with what pomp thou, my mighty God, and my King, wast brought into the sanctuary, (2 Sam. vi. 13. 15, 16.)

Ver. 25. *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; amongst them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*] Part of the Levites went singing before, and the rest with musical instruments followed after; (1 Chron. xv. 16. 28.) and, to complete the melody, the damsels playing with timbrels came between them both.

Ver. 26. *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*] And as they went along, they sang this song; O bless your good God, in all your assemblies: bless the Lord, all ye that are the offspring of Israel.

Ver. 27. *There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*] Who were universally assembled to accompany that pomp; (1 Chron. xiii. 5. xv. 3.) for not only the nearest tribes were there, *viz.* Benjamin, little indeed in number, (Judg. xxi. 6.) but from whom the first king of Israel came; and the princes of the tribe of Judah, the great support and prop of the kingdom: but the princes also of those which were most remote, as Zebulun and Naphtali, came to attend at that solemnity.

Ver. 28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*] This happy union, thy God, O Israel, hath brought about; and thereby made thee strong and formidable to thy enemies: and may it please thee, O God, to continue and confirm it; for as it is begun, so it must be perfected by thee alone.

Ver. 29. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.*] Pour down thy blessings upon Jerusalem out of thy sanctuary, (1 Sam. i. 9. iii. 3.) which now thou hast settled there: and so shall heathen kings bring presents, (2 Sam. viii. 9—11.) in token of their subjection to thee.

Ver. 30. *Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.*] Destroy that fierce prince, (2 Sam. viii. 3.) who like a wild beast of the forest comes against us; with a great number of captains as furious as bulls; and of soldiers as insolent as young heifers: who prances in arms plated with silver, and, unprovoked by us, makes war upon us merely to satisfy his vain ambition, or desire of wealth: scatter, good Lord, all such people as have no better reason for the blood they delight to shed.

Ver. 31. *Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*] Which shall invite even the Egyptians to send princely ambassadors to Jerusalem: and the neighbouring countries also (1 Kings iv. 21.) shall make haste to stretch out their hands unto the Divine Majesty, in oblations and prayers (which the most idolatrous nations in the world shall, in abundance, offer unto the Lord Christ, when he reigns).

Ver. 32. *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord. Selah.*] Nothing shall conduce so much to their happiness: and therefore, O ye kingdoms of the earth, both far and near, sing joyful songs unto God; set forth the praises of the great Lord of all the world with hymns and psalms.

Ver. 33. *To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens which were of old, lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.*] Whose empire is the most ancient of all other, and extends beyond the highest heavens: hearken when it thunders, and consider how terrible his majesty is; for that is his voice, which makes the mightiest men on earth to tremble.

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Ver. 34. *Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.*] I would advise you all to acknowledge his Divine power, by hearty submission to him; whose care over Israel as plainly appears in many magnificent works, as thunder declares his strength in the clouds.

Ver. 35. *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his people. Blessed be God.*] O God, thy dreadful majesty is to be most humbly adored, who striketh terror into thy enemies, both out of thy sanctuary here in Zion, and out of thy sanctuary in heaven: but art most gracious to thy people, whom, as thy peculiar portion, thou enduedst with mighty strength and invincible courage. Blessed be God for his goodness to us.

PSALM LXIX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, the title assures us, was composed by David; and the matter of it sufficiently declares, that he was in extreme great danger when it was penned. I should suppose it might have been about that time, when he concluded, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul, (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) were it not for what we read here, ver. 35. of this Psalm, concerning God's love to Zion: which was not then in the possession of the Israelites. And therefore it must rather be indited when he was persecuted by his rebellious son Absalom: who pressed him so sorely, and reduced him to such lamentable straits, that, as he feared he should never be able to extricate himself; so he could find no words high enough to express the agonies into which they cast him. But this is not so considerable a difficulty, as to be sufficient to incline those who read the whole Psalm seriously, to conclude that it hath no reference to Saul's persecution: unto which some passages in it seem more plainly to belong than to the other. And therefore I suppose he only reviewed it, (see Psal. lxx.) and added the thirty-fifth verse, in the rebellion of Absalom: which was likewise so grievous and dangerous, that he could find no words fitter to represent his sad condition, than those he had formerly used in the like distress. And some of the expressions, it is manifest, are such as were not literally fulfilled in him, in either of those afflictions, but in our Saviour Christ: of whom David was a figure; both in his sufferings, and in his advancement after them to a kingdom. There is no mystery, I suppose, in the word *Shoshannim* (as some of the Jews fancy), but it only denotes that the master of the music was to take care this Psalm should be sung as the forty-fifth: to which I refer you for an account of this word.

Why Theodoret should think this Psalm was made without respect to David, for the Jews in the captivity of Babylon, praying for deliverance out of that servitude, I cannot imagine. But what he adds concerning our Saviour's sufferings, which are here foretold, together with the utter overthrow of the Jewish nation, who were the authors of them, is very considerable. For because, saith he, they were so audaciously wicked, as to do that to their benefactor and Saviour, which they had suffered from their spiteful enemies; God the righteous judge condemned them to suffer that themselves, which they prayed might fall on the heads of those enemies.

Ver. 1. *SAVE me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.*] O most mighty God, in whom alone I hope for safety; deliver me, I beseech thee, out of this miserable condition; wherein I am overwhelmed with so many calamities, that my life is in extreme danger, unless thou mercifully preserve it.

Ver. 2. *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*] There is no hope otherways, that I should escape: for I am like a man that sinks deeper and deeper into the mud, and can find no bottom; or that is fallen into the very deepest place in a river; and carried away out of the reach of human help, by the violence of the stream.

Ver. 3. *I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.*] I have long also implored thy help, with most earnest prayers; even till I am tired with my crying: I can now scarce speak a word, nor lift up my eyes towards heaven, from whence, with great intention of mind, I have expected some relief; but cannot yet obtain it of my God, who hath been formerly most gracious to me.

Ver. 4. *They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; then I restored that which I took not away.*] No, rather my enemies are grown more formidable, both for their number, which exceeds the hairs of my head, and for their power, which enables them to destroy me: to which they want no will, having conceived an implacable, but undeserved, hatred to me. Who have been so far from provoking their malice, that I am content, rather than quarrel with them, to part with my own right; and make them satisfaction for a wrong that I never did them.

Ver. 5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*] O God, the righteous judge, I make my appeal to thee, who knowest the very worst of me: and protest, that whatsoever my mistakes or my wilful sins have been, which cannot escape thy sight, I never did them any injury, nor gave them cause to persecute me.

Ver. 6. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.*] Which will move thee, I hope, to take some compassion on me; for it will extremely dishearten all pious men, if thou sufferest innocence to be thus ruined: for their sakes, as well as for mine, be pleased to relieve me: O let not those that rely alone on thee, O Lord, the mighty God, who commandedst all the powers in heaven and earth, hang down their heads for shame, to see me deserted by thee: let not those, O God (who hast engaged thyself unto us by a gracious covenant), that commend themselves to thee in well-doing, be confounded; as they will, if they see me forsaken by thee.

Ver. 7. *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.*] For it is upon thy account (merely because I adhere to thee, and will use no unlawful means to right myself, 1 Sam. xxiv. 10, &c.) that I have thus long suffered so many reproaches and abuses, as have made me extremely contemptible.

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Ver. 8. *I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.*] Not only to those that do not know me, but to my cousins and familiars; nay, to those who lay in the same womb with me: who behave themselves towards me as if I were a perfect stranger; or a man of another country and religion.

Ver. 9. *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*] Whereas thou knowest, it was nothing but my ardent zeal for thy honour and service (not any childish ambition) which made me hazard my life for them; and was the first occasion of this hatred they bear me, (1 Sam. xviii. 6—8. as it will be of the death of the Messiah, John ii. 17.) I could not endure the blasphemies which I heard against thee, but they moved my indignation (as they will do his, Rom. xv. 3.) as much as if they had been against myself, (1 Sam. xvii. 10. 26. 45.)

Ver. 10. *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*] These things grieved me exceedingly; and it hath cost me many a tear, while I humbled my soul with fasting, to bewail their impiety, and the dishonour that was done thee: but they took occasion from thence only to despise me; and to load me with greater reproaches, either of weakness or of hypocrisy.

Ver. 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.*] And still the more sorrowfully I debased myself, wearing sackcloth in token of my heaviness, the more I was scorned and derided; and it was the common saying (when they would express their utmost hatred or contempt of any man), I value him no more than I do David.

Ver. 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.*] This is the language even of the grave senators, and judges of the land, who ought in reason rather to have vindicated my innocence, (Gen. xxiii. 10. 18. xxxiv. 20. Ruth iv. 1. Prov. xxii. 22.) as well as of the idle and dissolute companions, who, in their drunken meetings, make abusive songs and libels on me.

Ver. 13. *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*] While I in the mean time do nothing but only commend myself with the greater earnestness unto thee, O Lord; who, now that I am so despicable, wilt think it, I hope, the fittest time to be favourable to me: hear my prayer, O God, I beseech thee, and thereby magnify thy abundant mercy, and thy faithfulness, in such a seasonable deliverance of me.

Ver. 14. *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*] For I am in extreme great danger of perishing in this distress, unless thou interpose (as I most humbly again beseech thee that thou wilt, ver. 1, 2.) for my deliverance: O leave me not in this miserable condition into which I am plunged; but deliver me from my bitter enemies, and all the troubles and difficulties wherein they have involved me.

Ver. 15. *Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*] Which are great and many, and extremely dangerous; enough to make me despair of safety, did I not depend on thee; that thou wilt not suffer me to be carried away, overwhelmed, and buried in this heap of calamities which oppress me so sorely, that I am ready to sink under the weight of them.

Ver. 16. *Hear me, O Lord; for thy loving-kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.*] Do not fail my expectation, O Lord, whose loving-kindness, as it is the only comfort I have, so it gives me abundant consolation: for it is prone to pity and relieve those that are distressed; and will incline thee, I hope, to look now favourably upon me, as thou hast done, many and many a time, with most compassionate mercy towards me.

Ver. 17. *And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.*] Who, as despicable as I am, yet am thy servant; and upon that score claim the patronage of my most gracious Lord and Master: O disown me not, especially now that I am in such helpless straits; but rather make the greater haste to relieve me.

Ver. 18. *Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me, because of mine enemies.*] For nothing less than my life (which is in imminent danger) will satisfy the rage and hatred of my enemies: therefore interpose thy power for my rescue, and let not them have the pleasure (which will make them still more insolent) to see me ruined.

Ver. 19. *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.*] Thou art perfectly acquainted with the reproaches, the shameful and contumelious abuses of all sorts, which I have suffered; and must still (without thy seasonable deliverance) endure from my cruel enemies: none of whom, nor of their secret plots, and subtle lies, whereby they seek to defame and undo me, are hidden from thy all-seeing eyes.

Ver. 20. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*] Which behold likewise, what an intolerable burden it is to me to be thus loaded with reproaches, and to have no means to clear myself from their false imputations: it even breaks my heart, and I am oppressed with heaviness, looking still for some help to arrive; but, alas! I cannot meet with so much as the comfort of any body to condole with me.

Ver. 21. *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*] Instead of that, they exasperated my grief; and because I was so miserable, reproached me the more bitterly: just as if, when a man is hungry, one should give him gall to eat; or when he is thirsty, they should give him (as they really will do to Christ, John xix.) vinegar to drink.

Ver. 22. *Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*] Which barbarous usage shall meet with a suitable vengeance; for they shall have no friends neither: but they that eat of their meat shall betray them, and their prosperity shall prove their ruin. (This shall be the recompence of those that abuse the Messiah, as now they do me, Rom. xi. 9.)

Ver. 23. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*] They shall be deprived of all judgment, and not be able to see the evils that are coming on them; or if they do, let them not be able, O Lord, to prevent them; but make their councils uncertain, and let them have no power to execute any good design for their preservation.

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Ver. 24. *Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*] Pour out on a sudden so many evils upon them, that they may not be able to escape; but feel they suffer the most dismal effects of thy severest and lasting displeasure against them.

Ver. 25. *Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents.*] Let their most magnificent structures be laid waste; and root them out so entirely, that there may not be a man left to dwell in their poorest cottages, (Matt. xxiii. 38. Acts i. 20.)

Ver. 26. *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*] For they had no pity upon the miserable; but instead of comforting him, when they saw him afflicted by thee, they took that opportunity to insult over him, and oppress him: nay, made a pastime of his calamity; and added to all his other suffering, their scoffs and jeers, their lies and calumnies, or at least their uncharitable censures of him.

Ver. 27. *Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness.*] Let such obstinate offenders be quite deserted by thee; and by thy just judgment be suffered to go on to complete their iniquity, and never obtain any mercy from thee.

Ver. 28. *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*] Let them be cut off before their time, in the midst of their jollity; and let them enjoy none of the blessings which thou hast promised to the righteous.

Ver. 29. *But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*] But let me, O God, who now am despised and dejected, be graciously delivered by thee, and raised above the contempt or power of such men to depress me.

Ver. 30. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*] And I will not be unmindful of the benefit, but praise thy power and goodness in joyful hymns; and acknowledge how great they are, in thankful commemorations of them.

Ver. 31. *This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*] Which will be, I know, more acceptable sacrifices to the Lord, than if I should bring him a whole ox, when he is young and in his prime, and offer him at his altar.

Ver. 32. *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.*] For other pious men, reading in my songs the goodness of the Lord, will be filled with joyful hopes, when they fall into such-like troubles as I am in: they will think they hear me saying to them, Do not despond, but be of good comfort, whosoever you are that seek God, and faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 33. *For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*] For the Lord, you see, doth not fail to relieve the afflicted and helpless men, when they cry unto him, and rely on him alone: but owns them for his servants, when they are no better than slaves; by delivering them from their hard and cruel bondage.

Ver. 34. *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.*] Let the whole world therefore join together, to celebrate him with their highest praises: for one tongue is not sufficient to proclaim his most excellent goodness, and to thank him for all his benefits.

Ver. 35. *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.*] Which shall be continued towards Zion; for God will preserve it from being destroyed in these tumults: and will repair the ruins of the other cities of Judah; that his people may dwell quietly, and not be disturbed in their possessions.

Ver. 36. *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it; and they that love his name shall dwell therein.*] And their posterity also may hereafter inherit it; provided they faithfully serve him, and heartily love him and his religion: for then they shall dwell securely in Zion; and offer the continual sacrifice of praise unto him.

PSALM LXX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, to bring to Remembrance.

ARGUMENT.

It is not easy to determine, whether this Psalm was only separated from the fortieth (whereof, for the main, it is a part), that it might serve those who are in any distress, as a short form recommending themselves and their condition to God; or that David in some new danger (probably that into which he fell by Absalom's conspiracy, as Theodoret thinks) took a review of what he had there said, and, with some small alterations, composed this as a distinct prayer, to be used by him constantly, during the time of that sharp affliction. I incline to this latter, because there is some difference (though not very much, in the fourth verse) between every verse of this Psalm and those in the latter end of the fortieth, from which it is taken; just as there is between the fifty-third and the fourteenth. See what I have said there; and in the title of the thirty-eighth Psalm, you will find why this is called, *A Psalm to bring to Remembrance.*

Ver. 1. *MAKE haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord.*] O God, the judge of the world, thou seest the danger I am in is so exceeding great, that I am undone without thy speedy relief: which I beseech thee therefore not to delay; but to make haste, O Lord, to declare thy power in sending me seasonable help for my rescue, now that I am ready to perish.

Ver. 2. *Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.*] My enemies fancy that I cannot escape their hands: but do thou most shamefully disappoint all those that restlessly endeavour to take away my life: defeat them, and put them to flight with open disgrace, whosoever they be that study to do me any mischief.

Ver. 3. *Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha!*] Let a total rout of their forces be the recompence of their shameful deeds; whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame, when they insulted over my calamity, and made a mock both of it, and of my hope that thou wouldest deliver me.

Ver. 4. *Let all those that seek thee rejoice, and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.*] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek by no other means, but such as thou allow-

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est, for safety, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly: let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people never cease to say, Let the righteous Judge of the world be praised; let the glory of his wonderful works be every where published and extolled.

Ver. 5. *But I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying.*] O God, I beseech thee again, delay not to speed the relief I expect from thee; that this may be my song also: for at present I am stripped of all, and utterly destitute of human help; nay, so forlorn, that I shall perish presently, unless thou prevent it, O Lord; on whom alone I rely for help and deliverance, which I once more beseech thee to send me speedily.

PSALM LXXI.

ARGUMENT.

Though this Psalm want an inscription, yet it is generally thought that David was the author of it: and if he was, there is no doubt he composed it upon the occasion of Absalom's unnatural rebellion. For the matter of the Psalm sufficiently informs us, that when he made it he was in extreme great danger of perishing; and this danger also happened in the time of his old age, (ver. 9.) when he was gray-headed, (ver. 18.) Now he was not so during the time of Saul's persecution, (2 Sam. v. 4.) but in that of Absalom's he was; which though it did not last so long as the other, yet in this regard was more grievous to him; that it fell out in his declining years, when men are more unapt for toil and labour, and naturally desirous of quiet and repose. And therefore he begins the Psalm almost in the same words as he doth one of those which he made when he was distressed by Saul, (Psal. xxxi.) in his younger years, when he was better able to bear it.

As for the title, which some of the Greek translators, and from them the Latin, have prefixed to this Psalm (which they will have to be a Psalm *of the sons of Jonadab and the first captives*), it is so far from the business, that it is hard to give any account of it. For Theodoret pertinently observes, that the sons of Jonadab were not among the first captives; and that he who made this inscription, confesses he did not find it in the Hebrew, but placed it there himself. Yet that learned father, I know not for what reason, takes this Psalm to have been composed by David, in the person of those who were captive in Babylon; wishing deliverance from that servitude, and desiring to be restored to their own land.

Ver. 1. *IN thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.*] Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these troubles which have befallen me, I have no confidence in any thing, but only thy powerful goodness; which I hope will not fail me now, no more than it hath ever done heretofore; for I shall be lamentably ashamed, if thou shouldest frustrate my expectation.

Ver. 2. *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*] Magnify thy mercy and fidelity in delivering me, and finding a way for my escape from these dangers that surround me: let me obtain this extraordinary favour of thee, and preserve me from falling into the hands of those who have conspired to destroy me.

Ver. 3. *Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.*] For I am forced to quit my habitation, and have no place of safety (so universal is the revolt) to retreat unto; but whensoever I fly to thy almighty protection, do thou always keep me as secure as if I reposed myself in an impregnable castle: it is thy purpose, I am confident, to preserve me; for I never trusted in any other strong hold or fortress, but thee alone.

Ver. 4. *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked; out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*] Deliver me, therefore, from falling into the power of that turbulent man, who hath no fear of thee before his eyes: from the power of him that cares not by what perfidious arts, or cruel violence, he brings his ends to pass.

Ver. 5. *For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.*] For in thee, O Lord, who hast a sovereign dominion, which alters not, have I placed all my hope; and from thee is my expectation: when I was but a youth, I confided in thee, (1 Sam. xvii. 33. 37.) and was marvellously preserved by thee.

Ver. 6. *By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.*] Who didst take care of me, even before I could trust in thee; for I have been supported by thee, and preserved in innumerable dangers, ever since I came out of my mother's womb: where I had perished also, if thy power had not drawn me thence, and brought me into the world; to praise and bless thee, as I have ever done, and will never cease to do, to the end of my days.

Ver. 7. *I am as a wonder unto many: but thou art my strong refuge.*] There are many, indeed (especially the great ones), that stare upon me, as if I were a monster; marvelling as much at this confidence I place in thee, as they do at my sudden fall into this deplorable condition: but, for all their taunts, I do not look upon myself as abandoned by thee; but have a strong hope that thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 8. *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*] And that I shall still have abundant cause to praise without ceasing thy most magnificent goodness towards me.

Ver. 9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*] I have deserved, I know, very ill of thee; but let me prevail with thee, notwithstanding, for the continuance of thy favour towards me; and do not reject me now in my old age: O forsake me not, when I have most need of thy help, and am least able to do any thing for myself; but let that good providence, which watched over me in my youth, be still my security.

Ver. 10. *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.*] For my enemies are no less subtle, than they are cruel; having defamed me, and taken away my reputation: as they now seek for an opportunity, and for that end are combined in a strong conspiracy to take away my life, (2 Sam. xv. 3. 12.)

Ver. 11. *Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.*] Encouraging one

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another in their enterprise with such words as these; God it is manifest hath forsaken him, for the hearts of all Israel are turned from him, and his own heart faileth him; (2 Sam. xv. 13, 14.) pursue him closely now, and we shall certainly take him; for he hath not forces enough to withstand us, and to deliver him out of our hands, (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 12. *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.*] But how false soever my subjects are, it daunts me not, if thou, O God, who judgest righteously, will not be estranged from me: O my God, who hast hitherto so wonderfully preserved me, let this their vain confidence, and insulting language, incline thee to make the greater speed to relieve me.

Ver. 13. *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*] Let those implacable enemies, that will not be satisfied but with my life, be most shamefully disappointed; and see all their forces wherein they trusted quite dissipated, and come to nothing: expose them that design my ruin to the open shame and contempt of all the world; when they find that they have only ridiculously contrived their own destruction.

Ver. 14. *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*] And I will learn thereby, both to hope in thee perpetually (as now I do) even in the greatest straits and difficulties; and to add new songs of praise, over and above all those which I have already composed, to magnify thee for the vast heap of benefits which thou hast conferred on me.

Ver. 15. *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day long; for I know not the numbers thereof.*] That shall be the subject of my songs, to publish thy mercy and truth in judging righteously between me and my enemies: this shall be my continual employment; though I shall never be able to tell the least part of that mercy, which will appear in my deliverance from such formidable enemies.

Ver. 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*] I will enter notwithstanding upon this work, of pondering in my mind, and publishing with my mouth, the mighty things which I expect, from the sole powers of the great Lord and Governor of all things: I will not ascribe them to my own deserts, or to the courage or fidelity of those few friends that still adhere to me; but to thy undeserved favour, and faithfulness to thy word; and to that alone will I give the praise.

Ver. 17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*] O good God, thou hast given me many instances of this kind power and faithfulness of thine ever since I was a youth: (ver. 5.) and from thence unto this present moment thou hast been doing wonderful things for my preservation and preferment; which I have not failed to proclaim and thankfully commemorate.

Ver. 18. *Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*] And therefore do not now, O God, abandon the care of me, when I need it most: but continue the same kindness to me in my declining years, which I found when I was a youth: and let me survive these calamities, to proclaim thy power in fresh instances of it to this present generation; and let all posterity know how mighty it is, in making a few victorious over very great multitudes.

Ver. 19. *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?*] Which I do not despair to see, when I consider how infinitely thy mercy, O God, surpasses all our deserts, nay, expectations; and what stupendous things thou hast already done for me, such as have no example: for who is there, O God, that can be compared to thee, either in goodness to design well for us, or in power to do what thou thinkest good?

Ver. 20. *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*] I never was in such straits and distresses (and yet I have been in the greatest and sorest) but I found relief from thee: and therefore I doubt not thou wilt revive me, now that all men give me up for dead; and draw me out of this extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help.

Ver. 21. *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*] Nay, thou wilt not only restore me to my former greatness, but much augment the splendour of it: and though now I seem forsaken by thee, wilt return again, and so surround me with thy favour, that my future comforts shall far exceed my present troubles.

Ver. 22. *I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.*] And then sure I shall be no less forward to bless thee than thou art to bestow thy benefits on me: I will bless thee, O my God, in the most joyful manner, with the psaltery and harp, and the rest of my musical instruments; which shall play to the songs I will compose in praise of thy faithfulness and constancy to thy word; O thou, whose incomparable excellences are peculiarly known unto, and celebrated by, thy people Israel.

Ver. 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.*] It is not possible to express the joy wherewith not merely my lips, but my heart and soul, shall sing triumphant songs; for the miraculous deliverance which I expect from thee.

Ver. 24. *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*] Which shall not only be the subject of my solemn songs, but of my constant discourse; wherein I will perpetually magnify thy goodness and truth towards me, and thy just vengeance upon my enemies: whom I look upon already as utterly defeated; and hanging down their heads, to see that ruin fall upon themselves which they designed for me.

PSALM LXXII.

A Psalm for Solomon.

ARGUMENT.

That David was the author of this Psalm, we may be satisfied from the conclusion of it. From whence we may also gather, that it was made by him towards the conclusion of his life: when, by his command, Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, took Solomon and set him upon his throne, (1 Kings i. 39, &c.) that David might have the satisfaction to see all the great men do homage to Solomon, and acknowledge him for their suc-

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ceeding sovereign before he died: which you find they did, (see 1 Chron. xxix. 24.) And thereupon the spirit of the holy man being transported with an extraordinary joy, he indited this Hymn, and sent it to Solomon: wherein he first recommends him to the Divine benediction, and then instructs him how to make his people happy; by describing the qualities of a good king, and the prosperous state of the kingdom under his government. Which his eyes began to behold before he died, (1 Chron. xxix. 25.) and he hoped others should behold when he was gone: to the example and admiration of all following generations. For what we translate in the future time, as if it were a prophecy, may be construed to be only a prayer. Which he carries on in so high a strain, in some places, that the words had not a full accomplishment in Solomon, nor in any one else, till the appearing of that great King, Christ. Of the happiness of whose reign, and of the justice of whose government, together with the mightiness, and the largeness, and the eternal continuance of his kingdom, his father David here prophesies.

Of that there can be no reasonable doubt (for the Jews themselves acknowledge it, as appears by the Chaldee Paraphrase, Midrasch Tehillim, the book Siphre, and many others): but that in this Psalm he prophesies of nothing else, and hath no respect to Solomon, as Theodoret supposes in his interpretation, seems as far wide from the truth, as to say, that he looks no farther than Solomon. For the Psalm doth in part agree as aptly (if not more) to Solomon, as the name of Solomon doth to the Messiah, our Saviour Christ: who was indeed the Prince of Peace, and left his peace with his disciples when he left the world (as Theodoret notes), and made peace wheresoever his doctrine was entertained, and his government settled over men's hearts. Yet he is not the only person here spoken of; but, as St. Jerome hath excellently stated the matter, in Solomon himself there was the shadow and image of the truth, which was more perfectly fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour.

Ver. 1. *GIVE the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.*] O God, the supreme judge of the world, bestow I beseech thee upon Solomon, who is now anointed to sit on my throne, such a right judgment in all things, and such uprightness and integrity of heart, that he may govern thy people according to thy laws; and, tempering justice with mercy, may be a worthy successor to me, who have now resigned my charge unto him.

Ver. 2. *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.*] The weight of which I know is so exceeding great, that he needs thy special guidance and assistance: by which he may be able to administer all affairs, with such impartial justice and clemency; that the poorest subjects he hath may be as dear unto him, as they are unto thee; and recover their rights, or be preserved in them, from the power of those who would oppress them.

Ver. 3. *The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.*] So shall all parts of the kingdom be most happy; living in peace, and enjoying the blessed fruits of it: while all the judges of the land, both great and small, make it their study to maintain them in their just rights and liberties.

Ver. 4. *He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.*] And his authority is not abused to the oppression of the poor; and the making those more miserable, who have nothing but beggary left them for their inheritance: but employed for their defence and preservation; and for the crushing of those, that, by fraud and force, are injurious to them.

Ver. 5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*] Which righteous administration shall redound to his everlasting honour, and win him such reverence and observance from his people, as shall make him a lively emblem of the great King, Christ: whose happy subjects shall never cease to worship and praise him day and night to the world's end.

Ver. 6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.*] For he shall not endeavour to be formidable to them like a tyrant, whose government imitates the thunder, storms, and tempests: but condescend most graciously to the meanest; and rule them in so soft and gentle a manner, as shall make his authority no less acceptable and beneficial, than the rain is to the after-grass, or dripping showers, which fall in the summer heat, to refresh the parched earth.

Ver. 7. *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.*] The wicked shall have no preferment in his days; but righteous and virtuous men shall grow to a great height, and flourish as the plants do after those cherishing showers: whereby such lasting peace and tranquillity shall be established, as nothing can exceed, but the blessed times of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Ver. 8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.*] Nor shall his empire be confined within the bounds of Judea; but, according to the promise made to our forefather Abraham, (Gen. xv. 18.) and renewed to his children, (Exod. xxiii. 31. Deut. i. 7. xi. 24. Josh. i. 3, 4.) he shall extend it from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt; (1 Kings iv. 21. 2 Chron. ix. 26. Ezra iv. 20.) and be the most illustrious type of that glorious kingdom of Christ, which shall spread itself throughout the world.

Ver. 9. *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.*] The most barbarous nations shall come and do him homage; and they that refuse it shall be humbled, and forced at last to submit and prostrate themselves with the lowliest reverence at his feet.

Ver. 10. *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*] The kings of the most distant countries, they of Tarshish, (1 Kings x. 22.) as well as Cyprus and Crete, and the rest of the isles, shall honour him with their presents; and so shall they of Arabia, as far as the Persian Gulf, approach him with gifts.

Ver. 11. *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.*] Yea, so many kings and nations shall make their obeisance, and subject themselves unto him; that it shall foreshadow the large extent of the kingdom of Christ, who shall be universally acknowledged, worshipped, and obeyed, by all kings, and all nations of the earth.

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Ver. 12. *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*] Nor shall they be induced to these submissions so much by the greatness of his power, the vastness of his riches, and the magnificence of his court, as by the fame of his justice, mercy, and compassion (wherein he shall resemble the Lord Christ). For no sooner shall any miserable wretch, who hath no friend in the world, implore his protection, but he shall instantly succour, defend, and relieve him.

Ver. 13. *He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.*] He shall take pity upon such helpless creatures, and add no heavier burden unto that of their lamentable poverty; nor shall he be prodigal of their lives, but as tenderly secure them as those of his greatest subjects.

Ver. 14. *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*] He shall preserve them from being ruined, either by the fraud or violence of those who are too subtle or too mighty for them; and love them so dearly, as never to satisfy his own ambition, covetousness, or revenge, with the expense of the precious treasure of their blood.

Ver. 15. *And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him; continually and daily shall he be praised.*] Whereby his reign shall be long and prosperous; and the longer he reigns, the richer presents shall be brought unto him (as there shall be to Christ from the eastern countries): together with their perpetual prayers for his continued prosperity; and the highest praises and commendations, which shall ever be in men's mouths, of his just and gracious government.

Ver. 16. *There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*] Which God shall bless with such plenty, that a handful of corn sown in the earth, even upon the top of barren mountains, shall spring up so thick, with ears so plump and full, that when they are shaken with the wind they shall make a noise like the cedars of Lebanon; nor shall the city be less fruitful than the country, but become as populous and well stored with all good things as the earth is with grass, or flowers in the spring.

Ver. 17. *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*] His memory and fame shall never die, but be propagated from father to son, aslong as the sun shall shine; and when they would wish well to another, they shall say, *God make thee as happy as Solomon:* for all people that hear of him shall look on him as the most excellent prince that ever was, except the king Messiah, whom all nations shall magnify and extol, and above all things desire his blessing.

Ver. 18. *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.*] For which good hopes, and for all other his benefits, I renew my thanks, (1 Chron. xxix. 10.) to the great Lord and Sovereign of all the world; who hath graciously chosen Israel for his peculiar people: let him be most heartily blessed and praised, whose bounty is stupendous, and incomparably beyond all that can be said or thought of it.

Ver. 19. *And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen.*] Let his supereminent perfections be for ever celebrated with our praises; and not with ours only, but let the whole world be possessed with a sense of the surpassing greatness of his wisdom, power, and love, and join together with us in his praises. Let it be so, let it be so; let us all consent to say again and again, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.

Ver. 20. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*] This was the last Psalm which David the son of Jesse composed, not long before he died: (and was all of his that the collector of this book could find before he published it.)

PART III.

PSALM LXXIII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins a new collection of seventeen Psalms, most of them very disconsolate and full of sad complaints, which make up the third book of this volume, as the Hebrews divide it. They were most of them composed by Asaph (and but one of them by David), though who he was is not resolved by interpreters: who suspect, indeed, there might be another author of some of these Psalms; but have no other Asaph to name, but Asaph the singer, who was famous in the days of David. (1 Chron. vi. 39. xvi. 5. 2 Chron. v. 12.) And accordingly Apollinarius thus descants upon the title, "The Divine invention of David failing in the composing of songs, Asaph arose, and by the Divine Spirit resounded this hymn." But it seems to me that there is another person of this name mentioned in the holy books (who may be more probably entitled to this work), called *Asaph the seer*, (see Psal. l.) who lived in the days of Hezekiah, (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) and whose son, I suppose, was then recorder. (2 Kings xviii. 37. Isa. xxxvi. 3.) Some of them, indeed (as I shall take notice in due place), may be thought rather to belong to another Asaph in aftertimes: but for the present Psalm (and most of the rest) I can find no person so likely to whom it may be entitled, as him now named: who composed it, I conceive, either when he saw the miserable havoc which strangers made among them in the days of Ahaz, (2 Chron. xxviii. 17—19. xxix. 8, 9.) or when Sennacherib invaded them, notwithstanding the reformation which Hezekiah had made: or, which is most probable, upon the occasion that David wrote the thirty-seventh Psalm, to comfort himself and good men, when they saw the lewder sort among them thrive and prosper, and the pious sometimes sorely afflicted: quite contrary to the sanctions of their law, which promised all good things to those that observed it, and threatened the evil to those that broke it. This extremely afflicted his spirit, and staggered his faith, till he considered the matter more deeply; and then he broke out into this meditation, saying,

Ver. 1. *TRULY God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*] I will never hereafter, whatsoever con-

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fusions I behold, question the justice of God's providence; but constantly affirm that he is not merely just, but very good; yea, hath a most singular love to his faithful people; who, notwithstanding the evils they endure, will never consent to do any evil.

Ver. 2. *But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*] Time was indeed, when I, even I, who have had such long experience of his care over me, began to doubt and stagger in my faith: nay, was in danger to tumble headlong into unbelief.

Ver. 3. *For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*] The reason was, that having a just indignation against the folly, or rather madness, of wicked men, it first vexed me to see them, notwithstanding their ill deservings, in a very flourishing condition; and then tempted me to think it very hard, that sober men should not equal, if not exceed, them in such happiness: especially when I saw no likelihood that it would end, but that they continue in their prosperity.

Ver. 4. *For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm.*] For as they carry on all their designs smoothly, and meet with no rub in their way, nor are in any danger (so great is their power), to be bound over by human justice to answer for their crimes, how many soever they commit: so they are not afflicted with sore diseases by the hand of God, nor brought to their graves with pains and torment; but after a long life, in firm and vigorous health, depart easily out of the world.

Ver. 5. *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*] Their life is nothing so laborious and toilsome, as that of many honest, but poor and wretched men: and they escape untouched, or are little hurt by such calamities as are common to all mankind.

Ver. 6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*] Which makes them so unsufferably proud, and vainly conceited of themselves, that they not only tyrannize over their neighbours, but openly boast of the power they have to do them mischief: and glory in all the violence and cruelty, whereby they maintain and increase their pompous greatness.

Ver. 7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*] In which they pamper themselves to such an excess, that in their very countenance they express the haughty swelling of their minds and hearts: which are strangely puffed up, by their being raised (not only beyond the expectation of all other men; but) far above all that they themselves at first imagined or could design.

Ver. 8. *They are corrupt; and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.*] They mock at all those who scrupulously tie themselves to the rules of justice, or tell them of the danger they run by their violation: for they threaten to undo all those that oppose them; and publicly declare, in the height of their arrogance, that they will not be bound by any laws.

Ver. 9. *They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth.*] No, not those of God himself, who (with all the invisible powers of which men talk), they say, is but a name; which they do not dread: and, therefore, no wonder if such blasphemers of his majesty spare neither high nor low, but let their tongues loose, to abuse and calumniate whomsoever they please upon earth.

Ver. 10. *Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*] And yet, as bad as they are, there is none of them but hath his followers and admirers; whom he first invites, and then retains, like beasts, by filling their bellies: which abundantly contents them, though others be squeezed and oppressed, to give them this poor satisfaction.

Ver. 11. *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?*] Nay, they drink in their opinions, and join with them in their impiety, saying, How can God know what we do here? or if he do, why should we think that he, who is so high, troubles himself about our affairs?

Ver. 12. *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*] For, behold, there are none that contemn him more than these men; and yet he is so far from inflicting any punishment on them, that none enjoy such a continued course of prosperity as they, whose wealth and power increase every day.

Ver. 13. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*] And verily, if these men discourse aright, I have taken a great deal of pains to little purpose; while I have studiously endeavoured to keep my heart pure from so much as ill designs, as well as to refrain the doing of any evil actions, from the charge of which I can safely purge myself.

Ver. 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*] And yet I am plagued perpetually by the restless malice of these wicked doers; which, as constantly as the sun rises, falls on me a deal sooner than on other men.

Ver. 15. *If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*] But, whatever confused and foolish thoughts came on a sudden into my mind, I concluded, upon more mature deliberation, that if I said as these men do, I should basely betray the cause of all them who are truly dear unto thee.

Ver. 16. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.*] And therefore resolved with myself, before I pronounced my sentence, to study this point more seriously; which at first sight appeared so hard, that it grievously perplexed me.

Ver. 17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*] And retiring myself into the holy places, to consult with thee, and with those to whom thou communicatest thy secrets, I was presently sensible how short their felicity is: unto which death having put an utter end, it is followed with a dismal after-reckoning in another world.

Ver. 18. *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.*] And next I considered, that all of them do not stand so firm as they imagine, but merely flatter themselves with vain hopes of continuing in their station to the end of their days: for being raised to the highest preferments, they find them to be very slippery places; from whence, to the amazement of themselves, and of all spectators, they come tumbling down into a most horrible ruin.

Ver. 19. *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*] Oh what an astonishing change is this! which is the most frightful, when on a sudden the Divine vengeance seizes on them;

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and, when they least expect it, an end is put to their greatness; nay, they are quite destroyed, in a most terrible manner, as if they had never been.

Ver. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*] So that it is but a dream of happiness wherein they live, and they pride themselves in a mere imaginary glory; which not only vanishes away, when thou, O Lord, dost arise to judge them, but becomes as contemptible, in that very city where they appeared in all their pomp and splendour, as the fine things which a man sees in his sleep are when he awaketh.

Ver. 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*] And therefore, when my spirit boiled with vexation, and grew sour at the sight of their prosperity; (ver. 2, 3.) when I was so vehemently provoked to passionate complaints, feeling the sharpest touches of grief and anger;

Ver. 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*] I now ingenuously acknowledge, it was for want of such manly and religious thoughts as these, which should have been in my mind when I thought of thy administrations; if I had not been dull and stupid, as void of sense as the beasts, which look only at things before their eyes, and have no regard to what is to come, or is not seen.

Ver. 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand.*] For, if I had looked beyond my senses, I might have seen that I am under the care of thy good providence, and that thou hast been my guide and my supporter, even when I had these brutish thoughts, and didst not suffer these wicked men to destroy me.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*] And therefore I ought in all reason still to conclude, that thou wilt direct me to behave myself so wisely, that I shall never fall into their snares: but, after I have suffered awhile, be preferred to those dignities from whence they fall; and, which is more, be so graciously accepted by thee, as to continue in them unto immortal glory.

Ver. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*] This I expect from thy almighty goodness, who art the sole object of my hope. For thou knowest there is none in heaven, whom I depend upon for help and protection, but thee alone; none upon earth, whose favour I seek, but only thine, which shall perfectly content me.

Ver. 26. *My flesh and my heart fail: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*] It is possible I may still be pressed with such sore afflictions, that not only my bodily strength, but also my courage, may begin again to fail me; but then I will recover myself, and fortify my soul by flying unto thee, O God, for safety: in whose love I will always think myself happy, and enjoy everlasting satisfaction.

Ver. 27. *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*] For there is nothing more certain or more remarkable than this; that they who, by forsaking thee, have put themselves far from under thy care, will never be able, by any other means, to save themselves from perishing: for thou hast already made such men a terrible example of thy displeasure; and utterly destroyed those, who, quitting thy service, have devoted themselves to the worship of other gods, (2 Chron. xxviii. 6. 18, 19. xxix. 7—9.)

Ver. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.*] And therefore I will learn, by their miscarriages, that it is the best and safest course for me to adhere to my good God, and to make my humble addresses to him alone. I have done so hitherto, and no danger shall tempt me hereafter to quit this hold, and to confide in any thing, but only in the Sovereign of the world, who never fails those that depend upon him; and will, I hope, be so gracious unto me, that I shall have abundant cause to publish and proclaim to all others the works of his providence; in preserving the good, and in throwing the wicked down, at last, to the ground.

PSALM LXXIV.

Maschil of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

The desolation of Jerusalem and of the temple, as well as the rest of the country, made by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, was the sad occasion of this Psalm. For it is altogether improbable, that it hath respect to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, as some fancy; because, as Theodoret pertinently notes (to omit all other reasons), we read nothing in any history of his burning the temple, or so much as of his laying the city waste; which are both here most sorrowfully bewailed by Asaph. Who was not therefore that Asaph in David's time (unless we should grant him to have written by the spirit of prophecy, and predicted what should be in aftertimes, as a great many think), because there was no such temple in those days, nor had been, as is here described: nor was it Asaph the seer in Hezekiah's days (of whom see Argument of the foregoing Psalm), who saw no such desolation made by Sennacherib (for he did not take Jerusalem, nor shoot so much as an arrow into it), nor, in all likelihood, prophesied of the destruction here spoken of; because the description of it in this Psalm is so plain, that we may most reasonably think the author of it had it before his eyes, and did not merely see it by the spirit of prophecy; which is not wont to foretell things in so clear a manner, but more obscurely and darkly.

I conclude, therefore, it was some other Asaph who composed this Psalm, in the time of the captivity, and in the middle, or rather towards the conclusion of it; because he complains (ver. 9.) that they had no prophet (as there was in the beginning of the captivity, particularly Jeremiah) to tell them how long it should last. And, considering that in the second verse he speaks of himself as one that dwelt still in the land of Israel, pointing to Mount Zion as a place near to him, I take him to have been some pious man of the posterity of Asaph, who was suffered to remain there with the Chaldeans.

And if it were fit to suppose him to have written this Psalm very young, and to have lived to a great age, when I have no proof of either, I should guess him to be Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, in the days of Nehemiah; who desired Artaxerxes to write to him, to furnish him with timber out of Lebanon, for the rebuilding some of those places which the Psalmist here complains were de-

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stroyed. Among which, the porch of the court of the sanctuary remained unbuilt even unto those times.

However, from the mention of Mount Zion in the second verse, it is manifest Grotius forgot himself, when, in his notes upon ver. 6. he applies this Psalm to the destruction of Shiloh, which he supposes Asaph to have here bewailed. For Mount Zion had then never been in their possession, as it was afterward, and had lain so long waste, (ver. 3.) when Asaph wrote this Psalm, that it looked like a perpetual desolation. Besides, the tabernacle was not burnt when Shiloh was destroyed, but remained, though without the ark, till the days of Solomon, 2 Chron. i. 3. (see Psal. lxviii.) And of the meaning of *Maschil*, see Psal. xxxii.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*] O God, the sovereign judge of the world, who hast justly expelled us out of our land, and continued our banishment so long, that little hope appears of our being restored to it again; behold the anguish of our souls wherein we cry unto thee for mercy: for we are confounded to see thee so highly incensed against those, who were once under thy most indulgent care, as if thou wert resolved never to be reconciled to us any more.

Ver. 2. *Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this Mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*] Thou hast not forgotten, we know, though it be very long ago, with the expense of how many miracles thou didst make our ancestors thy peculiar people: for which reason, though we be exceedingly undeserving, we beseech thee to let all the world see, thou wilt not utterly abandon the poor remainders of that nation, which thou didst acquire at so great a price; that kingdom, which thou didst rescue out of the most miserable slavery, to be thy own possession; and this Mount Zion, wherein (after thou hadst by many wonders brought us into Canaan, and rooted out the old inhabitants) thou wast pleased at last to settle thy abode among us.

Ver. 3. *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations, even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*] Make haste, good Lord, to come and visit the ruins of our country and city, which have lasted exceeding long, and will never be repaired without thy powerful help: which we implore against the authors of them; who, to all the other mischiefs they have done, have, with a peculiar spite, not only defaced, but utterly destroyed, thy dwelling-place.

Ver. 4. *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.*] They are thy enemies therefore as well as ours, whose fury and rage so transport them, that they roar rather than shout; whilst they triumph in those places where thy people were wont to meet to praise thy name: there they have set up their banners in token of their victory, and brag as if their gods were superior unto thee.

Ver. 5. *A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.*] Every one of them laid about him, and bestirred himself with all his might, as if he hoped to get renown by the mischief he did: which was committed with no more remorse, than if they had been lopping off boughs in the thickets of a forest, where they may be spared.

Ver. 6. *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*] Just so methinks I see (as if it were now a-doing) how they hacked and hewed with axes, and knocked down with hammers, the curious carved work of the temple: whose elegance would have moved any but barbarians to have preserved it, with as great a zeal as they employed to beat it in pieces.

Ver. 7. *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary; they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.*] But so mad was their rage, it was not satisfied with this, but set fire unto thy holy place: and what that did not consume, they pulled down; till they had utterly profaned the habitation consecrated to thy majesty, by laying it level with the ground.

Ver. 8. *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land.*] Nor did all this give a stop unto their fury; but they rather grew the more outrageous: for, designing quite to destroy our religion, both in this and in future generations, they left not so much as one place wherein we might meet to say our prayers, or hear the law, throughout the land.

Ver. 9. *We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*] And, which is the saddest thing of all, thou seemest to have left us too; and we see no token of thy Divine presence with us: so far we are from beholding any miraculous works, as our fathers did, for our deliverance, that there is not so much as a prophet to be found, to give us any advice, or speak a word of comfort to us: not a man among us, that can tell when these calamities will have an end.

Ver. 10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*] What a reproach is this, O God? which hath quite tired our patience, and made us cry unto thee to make haste to avenge thyself of these insulting enemies: stop their blasphemous mouths, O God, and let them not say any more, as they have done too long, that thou art not able to deliver us.

Ver. 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.*] For we are confounded, and know not what to say, while thou thus withdrawest thy powerful presence from us; that mighty power which was wont to do such wonders for us: exert it again, we beseech thee, and stretch it out for the destruction of those who have spoken of it so contemptuously.

Ver. 12. *For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*] Why should I despair of it? since the great God, whom they deride, hath many ages ago undertaken the government and protection of us: working for us such deliverances in this land, which now lies waste, as astonished all the world.

Ver. 13. *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*] Thou art that God, to whose power the raging sea is subject; which at thy command retired, and opened a way for us to pass through; but came back again with its wonted violence, and overwhelmed the Egyptians; who, like so many sea-monsters, thought to have devoured us.

Ver. 14. *Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wil-*

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derness.] Pharaoh, that fierce tyrant, as terrible as the vastest whales, thou didst utterly destroy there; with all his stern captains and commanders: whom the sea spewed up, (Exod. xix. 30.) to find their tombs in the bellies of the wild beasts and birds, which people the neighbouring wilderness.

Ver. 15. *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.*] Where, when our fathers wanted drink, thou madest water to gush out of a rock; (Exod. xvii. 6. Numb. xx. 9.) which followed them in a full stream, till they came to the borders of Canaan: and then thou driedst up the waters of Jordan, at a time when they ran violently, and (as if many rivers had been joined in one) it overflowed all its banks, (Josh. iii. 15. 17.)

Ver. 16. *The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.*] And still there are such instances of thy power, which the whole world, if they would but mind, have always before their eyes. For as thou didst sometimes change the dry land into a river, and a river into dry land; so thou dost continually change the day into night, and the night into day: having settled the moon to govern the one, and the sun to govern the other, in their turns.

Ver. 17. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.*] By thy almighty wisdom also it is, that the motion of the sun not only makes the days and nights, but the different climates of the earth, and the seasons of the year: which are sometimes hot, and sometimes cold; sometimes flourishing, as we see in the summer, with all manner of fruit; and sometimes stripped, as we see in the winter, of all its ornaments, that afterward it may be the more fruitful.

Ver. 18. *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*] And we sure have endured a very tedious winter; wherein all things have looked most ruefully. May it please thee now to return, like the sun, unto us, and let thy enemies know thou hast not forgotten how they have reproached thee, O Lord! (whom they ought to have honoured as the mighty Creator of all things) but wilt vindicate thy glory, by punishing these insolent people, who, foolishly puffed up with their victories, have despised and derided thy omnipotent majesty.

Ver. 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*] Deliver, we beseech thee, thy church, which, like a turtle-dove, can do nothing but meekly mourn, and make her silent complaints unto thee, from those violent men, who, like birds of prey, seek utterly to destroy her: let them not take away its life and being; but, though we be at present deserted by thee, yet hear our cries, and at last relieve a poor helpless company, who flee unto thee, and depend upon thee alone for safety.

Ver. 20. *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.*] Though we are unworthy to be regarded by thee, yet have regard unto thy own promises; wherein thou hast engaged thyself unto our fathers, to give to them and their posterity the land of Canaan: which is so far from being now inhabited by thy people, that every blind corner of it is a den of thieves and murderers; who have filled it with rapine and cruelty.

Ver. 21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*] O let not thy poor afflicted servant, who implores thy aid against these barbarous oppressors, be denied his suit; and go away ashamed, to see himself disappointed of his hope: but let him, and all the rest of thy miserable people, who were never in greater need of thy help, be restored to praise thy goodness in their ancient possessions; from whence they have been thus long banished.

Ver. 22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*] Appear, O God, in our behalf; and thereby vindicate thyself from reproach: let me again beseech thee, to shew that thou art not unmindful of all the scoffs, which prosperous fools belch out against thee every day.

Ver. 23. *Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*] It is time to punish all the insulting language of thy enemies: for the insolent brags and furious threats of those that oppose thee increase still more and more, and rise up to a greater height of audacious impiety.

PSALM LXXV.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith. A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

I take this Psalm to have been made by Asaph *the seer*, mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30. (see Psal. lxxiii.) after the great deliverance, which, by the strange destruction of Sennacherib's army, God gave the good king Hezekiah. For whose use Asaph composed this Psalm, and delivered it to the chief master of music in the tabernacle; that he might therein make his public profession of his obligations to Almighty God, and his resolution to serve him, and to depend upon him: as he advises all men else to do, if they would not be undone; or if they hoped for any good, of which he is the sole and absolute dispenser.

If *Al-taschith* be more than a note, that this Psalm was to be sung like to the fifty-seventh, and those that follow; it may signify as much as, *thou shalt not*, or *wilt not, destroy:* and be applied either to Sennacherib, who, the prophet told them, should not accomplish his design of destroying them, as he had done other nations, (2 Kings xix. 17. 2 Chron. xxvii. 14.) or to God, who had not given him commission, as he pretended, to destroy Jerusalem, (2 Kings xviii. 25.) but would defend it, (2 Kings xix. 34.) and not suffer it to be laid desolate.

Symmachus gives a more spiritual sense of the word, and calls this a *triumphal Song concerning immortality;* because it contains, as Theodoret explains it, a prediction of the righteous judgment of God in the destruction of the wicked, and rewarding the lovers of virtue: which should admonish us not to suffer any godly thoughts we have in our mind to perish; but to preserve them whole and entire, that we may inherit immortality.

What is to be understood by a *Psalm-Song*, see in the Argument of Psalm lxvii.

Ver. 1. *UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous*

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works declare.] Unto thee, O God, the righteous judge, who art the sole author of this great deliverance, do I and all my people give most solemn thanks: nor can we ever thank thee enough, but we must again and again renew our acknowledgments unto thee; whose almighty power is still ready at hand, we clearly see by the wonders thou hast done, to succour all those who gratefully commemorate thy benefits.

Ver. 2. *When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.*] And I will not content myself with these verbal praises alone; but as soon as I shall meet with a fit opportunity, and we can have our solemn assemblies again (which by this invasion have been interrupted, 2 Chron. xxxii. 1.) I will perfect the reformation which I have begun: and see that equal justice be done to all my people; as well as that they be preserved in thy true religion.

Ver. 3. *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.*] The whole country hath been in a miserable confusion; while their hearts melted with fear of an utter desolation: but as then I supported their spirits, and encouraged the great men and the officers to do their duty, (2 Chron. xxxii. 6—8.) so I will hereafter establish such magistrates and judges, as shall bring all into better order.

Ver. 4. *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.*] I have told them my mind already, and do still solemnly proclaim and declare, that I will proceed with the utmost severity against the contemners of thy laws; and therefore I advise them not to be so madly rude and insolent: for the proudest of them all shall know, that it is safest for them to be more modest, than to glory, as they do, in their impiety; or to boast of the power they have to be injurious to their neighbours.

Ver. 5. *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*] Do not vaunt of this, I once more advise you, nor bear yourselves high, as if you would outbrave heaven itself: be not refractory and stubborn, nor arrogantly say, that you will have your way, and that none shall curb you.

Ver. 6. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*] For which way soever you turn yourselves, whether to the east, or to the west, or to the mountainous deserts that lie on the north and south of us; in vain do ye think to escape the righteous judgment of God.

Ver. 7. *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*] Who, being the sovereign Lord and governor of the world, easily lays those low that proudly exalt themselves against his authority; and lifts up those that humbly submit themselves unto him.

Ver. 8. *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*] For he never wants power to inflict the most dreadful punishments; which (like an intoxicating wine, full of stupifying ingredients, that loosens the very joints, and takes away all a man's strength to resist) never fail to have their effect: and the godly may taste of them, nay suffer solely for a time; but the heaviest and most grievous punishments (like the dregs at the bottom of such wine) shall fall to the share of all the wicked of the land; who shall be forced to endure the utmost expressions of the Divine vengeance upon their sins.

Ver. 9. *But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*] And this I, who am his minister to execute his judgments, will not cease to declare, as long as I live, that none may pretend ignorance for their excuse: and I will sing praises unto God (who delivered Jacob from all evil), not only for his late miraculous preservation of us, by his vengeance on Sennacherib (whom he hath made an example of his wrath to all proud contemners of him), but for making me the instrument of so happy a reformation.

Ver. 10. *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*] For this is my resolution, not merely, as I said, to praise him, but to pull down the haughty spirit, and cut short all the power of the wicked, that they shall not be able to do such mischief as they desire: and to raise the righteous into such authority, that they shall not fear what their most insolent enemies can do unto them.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

It is visible to every eye, that the Psalmist here commemorates some notable victory over very powerful enemies: whereby God delivered (when it was in great danger) the whole country, particularly Jerusalem: which is called here Salem, (ver. 2.) by an usual form of speech among the Hebrews, who are wont, in names of places, to cut off the former part; instead of Abel-Shittim, saying only Shittim; and Nimrim, for Beth-Nimrim; Lechi, for Ramath-Lechi; Sheba, for Beer-Sheba, and many such-like, as Bochartus hath shewn in the second book of his Phaleg. cap. 25. and in the first part of his work concerning the animals named in Scripture, book ii. chap. 25.

And there is as little reason to doubt that the particular deliverance here aimed at is that from Sennacherib's army, which Asaph the seer, mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30. (see Psal. lxxiii.) was not content to celebrate in the former Hymn, which he made for the use of the king; but added this also, for his own use, and all other pious persons: who he hoped would join in it, especially when it was sung in the temple, as he directed the master of the music, after the same manner as Psal. iv.

Some of the Greeks seem to have perceived something of this: for though there be no such title in the ancient Hexaplus of Origen, yet, in aftertimes, Theodoret tells us, he found in some copies this inscription, which still continues, *An Ode against the Assyrian:* which Apollinarius follows.

Of a *Psalm-Song,* see Psal. lxvii.

Ver. 1. *IN Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel.*] God hath so illustriously demonstrated himself among us (in this unexpected and terrible execution) to be the sovereign ruler and judge of the world, that he must shut his eyes that doth not see it: his power, and all his other glorious perfections, which are conspicuous every where, are in no country so magnified as they are in Israel.

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Ver. 2. *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.*] Our enemies themselves, who reviled him, (2 Chron. xxxii. 17. 19.) and despised Jerusalem, (ver. 10.) are now sure convinced that there this mighty Lord maketh his abode: in the top of that mountain where he hath chosen to fix his dwelling-place.

Ver. 3. *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.*] Before the walls of which he hath slain, with an invisible dart, the fiery archers; (who have not shot so much as one arrow into it, 2 Kings xix. 32.) and made the shields, and swords, and the rest of their military preparations, altogether useless and unprofitable.

Ver. 4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*] Whereby thou, O Zion, art become more glorious than all the mountains, where the fiercest beasts of prey, or the most desperate robbers, have their resort, who never made such slaughters.

Ver. 5. *The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.*] For they, whose courage made them fear no danger, but confidently promised themselves the spoils of Jerusalem, are given unto us for a spoil: they lay down to sleep, but never awaked; (2 Kings xix. 35.) not a man among the most mighty of them was able to strike a stroke, or do any thing to defend himself against that hand which cut them off.

Ver. 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*] But the most experienced horseman, as well as they that rode in chariots, sunk down dead, at the sudden check, the severe rebuke, which they received from thee, O God of Jacob, whom they reproached, (2 Kings xix. 22, 23.)

Ver. 7. *Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*] Thou, and none but thou, art to be dreaded: and what king is he, that is able, for so short a time as a moment, to resist thy power? which in an instant can destroy all those who incur thy heavy displeasure.

Ver. 8. *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.*] We have an example of it before our eyes; for when we made our solemn appeal to thee, (2 Kings xix. 3, 4. 15, 16.) thou wast pleased to pronounce a sentence of condemnation from heaven upon our enemies, which struck such terror into those that survived, that they who before were full of rage, and made a tumultuous noise, (ver. 27, 28.) were as still as lambs, and durst not stir a foot, but only to return from whence they came, (ver. 28. 36.)

Ver. 9. *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.*] They were afraid to continue their attempts against us, when God, who had long suffered their insolence, sent an angel to chastise it, and to do execution upon them; and thereby delivered the helpless people of this land, who had patiently borne their horrible oppression.

Ver. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*] Which may well be a warning to all fell tyrants, not to be so fierce and outrageous; which will only present thee with a fairer opportunity to glorify thyself, and raise thy praise to a greater height; as thou hast now done, by suppressing the Assyrians' fury; who, if they have any relics of wrath, which may boil up again in their hearts, thou shalt chain it up, and not suffer it to break forth to our further disturbance.

Ver. 11. *Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that are round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*] And let this excite you all, who are thus marvellously delivered, to make more liberal promises of grateful sacrifices; as well as to perform those which you have already vowed, to the great Lord, your most gracious God: who so far excels all others, that the nations round about us, who hear the fame of this, shall reproach you (if you be forgetful of his benefits) by the presents which they shall make to him, (2 Chron. xxxii. 23.) who ought to be feared by all his friends, and is most terrible to his enemies.

Ver. 12. *He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.*] For he can easily, with a sudden stroke, not only take down the proud stomach, but take away the life of the fiercest captains and commanders; (2 Chron. xxxii. 21.) yea, make the greatest monarchs (who keep the world in awe) quake and tremble at his dreadful executions.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

A Psalm composed by Asaph, and sent by him to that song-master, who was over the children of Jeduthun; in which I imagined, at first sight, that he represented the sad condition of Hezekiah, and the motions of his heart towards God in his sickness, (2 Chron. xxxii. 24. Isa. xxxviii. 1.) But, upon farther consideration, it appears, from the latter part of it, that he bewails the calamity of all the nation: either when Sennacherib overran the country, or else in the captivity of Babylon. If we refer it to the latter, then it was not Asaph the seer, whom I mentioned before, (Psal. lxxiii.) that made this Psalm; but some other in aftertimes, (see Psal. lxxiv.) who laments the long continuance of their captivity; which looked like an utter forsaking by God; but he comforts himself, at last, with the remembrance of what God had done formerly for them, when he delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1. *I CRIED unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*] I have incessantly made my prayer to God, and I will still most earnestly entreat his favour: to him who hath justly afflicted us, and can alone relieve us, have I again and again renewed my importunate suit; which I hope will at last prevail with him for deliverance.

Ver. 2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.*] I have not negligently discharged this duty, but as the distress is great wherein we are, so I have restlessly implored help from the Lord: in the night, when men are wont to bury their troubles in sleep, I have with unwearied diligence spread out my hands unto him (in token that all my dependance is upon his power alone), resolving to admit of no consolation, till I obtained a gracious answer from him.

Ver. 3. *I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.*] I remem-

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bered, indeed, how kind God had been unto us in former times; but this only gave me the greater trouble, when I compared it with our present miseries; and the more I mused on it, the more my spirit was disturbed, and miserably afflicted.

Ver. 4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*] Insomuch that I could not close my eyes, to take a wink of sleep; nor open my mouth (such was my perturbation and astonishment) to express the heaviness of my grief.

Ver. 5. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*] All that I could do, was to recount thy merciful providences over our forefathers in times past; and ponder seriously what wonders thou didst for them many ages agone.

Ver. 6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart; and my spirit made diligent search.*] I called to mind all the songs I had indited, to celebrate the memory of those ancient benefits: and spent whole nights in silent meditations, and diligent inquiries, which I revolved to and fro in my mind; why he who had taken such care of our ancestors, had so long rejected us.

Ver. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?*] Will the Lord, thought I, abandon us for ever? Is he so incensed against us, that he will never be reconciled, nor intend to shew us any more favour?

Ver. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?*] Is his infinite mercy, which is the fountain of all his benefits, quite exhausted? and will he never hereafter speak a word of comfort to us?

Ver. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.*] Hath God, whose property it is to shew mercy, quite laid aside all thoughts of exercising his clemency towards us? or have we so highly provoked him to anger, that he hath no regard at all unto our miseries?

Ver. 10. *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*] But having thus complained, and said within myself, This is the thing which sorely afflicts me, to see such alterations in the proceedings of the Most High, that the same hand which formerly protected us now severely scourges us;

Ver. 11. *I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*] I presently considered, that there might be a change again; and resolved to comfort myself with the remembrance of the former works of the Lord; and to go back as far as the miracle thou didst for us (in bringing us up out of the land of Egypt), when our deserts were as small as in these days.

Ver. 12. *I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.*] Of all the ensuing wonders I will think, rather than on our present miseries: I will not omit one of them; but, instead of these complaints, make them the constant subject of my discourse.

Ver. 13. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*] From which I cannot but conclude, that the method of thy providence, O God, is not only perfectly holy and just, but quite out of our reach: nor is thy power inferior; but, as thou dost not proceed in the common way of our thoughts, so none can resist what thy incomparable majesty thinks fit to effect.

Ver. 14. *Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.*] For thou art the mighty God, who canst do miracles as easily as the most ordinary works: and hast made all the world sensible, that thy power exceeds both the strength and the opinion of all creatures.

Ver. 15. *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.*] Having delivered thy people, descended from Jacob, and miraculously preserved by Joseph, from the Egyptian bondage, by a long series of stupendous judgments upon Pharaoh and his servants, (Exod. vi. 6. Deut. vi. 21, 22. vii. 8.)

Ver. 16. *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.*] Which were followed presently with a greater wonder, when the waters of the Red Sea felt thy power, O God: they felt thy power to the very bottom of them; which so disturbed them, that they retreated, as if they had been affrighted at thy presence, and left a plain way for thy people to march through upon dry ground:

Ver. 17. *The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.*] But returned again upon the Egyptians (who pursued after us), accompanied with a terrible storm of rain, and thunder, and hail-stones; which flew about their ears, and brake the very wheels of their chariots, (Exod. xiv. 24, 25.)

Ver. 18. *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.*] The noise of this thunder filled all the air thereabout; and so did the lightning that flashed in their faces; which, together with a dreadful earthquake, made the very inhabitants of Canaan tremble, (Josh. ii. 10, 11.)

Ver. 19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*] We might well say then, that thy way is quite out of our reach; (ver. 13.) who madest a passage through the sea, a broad path through the boisterous waters: which, as none ever trod before or after, so they cannot trace the footsteps, which the waters have overflown and obliterated, (Exod. xiv. 26, 27.)

Ver. 20. *Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*] Nor did thy care over thy people end there; but, by the ministry of thy servants, Moses and Aaron, thou didst conduct them with the same tenderness that a good shepherd doth his sheep, through a horrid wilderness, in which thou feddest them, till they came to Canaan. [And thither the same power can, and the same goodness will, I hope, restore us: though now we seem neglected by thee, as our fathers were, for a time, in the land of Egypt.]

PSALM LXXVIII.

Maschil of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

When God gave his law to the Israelites, he commanded them not only to be careful to study it themselves, but to inculcate it upon their children, (as the Psalmist here remembers, ver. 5.) that they might propagate the knowledge of it to all future generations: (Deut. iv. 9. vi. 7, 8, &c. xi. 18, 19, &c.) and particularly to instruct them in the reason of their feasts; which were appointed for the commemoration of several benefits, which he would

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not have forgotten, (Exod. xiii. 8. 14.) In prosecution of which end, as Theodoret well observes, this Psalm was indited, by the prophetical grace (as his words are); that they and all their posterity might preserve in mind the wonderful works of God. An epitome of which (for the help of their memory) he here presents them withal; from the time of their coming out of Egypt, till David's promotion to the throne.

Where this narration concluding, it makes it probable this Psalm was composed by that Asaph, so often mentioned, as one of the principal singers in those days; who, setting before the people's eyes, as in a table, the benefits their fathers had received, with their shameful ingratitude, and the punishments inflicted upon them for it, teaches and instructs them who succeeded (for which reason some will have it called *Maschil*, see Psal. xxxii.) to learn greater gratitude and fidelity to their Benefactor; for fear they should incur his higher displeasure, if they did not beware by such sad examples.

Ver. 1. *GIVE ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*] Attend reverently, O my countrymen, for whom I have a particular affection, unto the admonition which now I intend to give you: listen diligently, I beseech you, to the following instruction.

Ver. 2. *I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old.*] It is no vulgar lesson which I would have you learn; nor will I be sparing in my instruction: but I will abundantly inform you in the most remarkable passages of God's providence in former times; which are more worthy your knowledge, than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles.

Ver. 3. *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*] And I will not report uncertain or doubtful things to you; or things done in another nation: but such as are of unquestionable credit; which you have heard and known to be recorded in your holy books: and our forefathers, who were eye-witnesses of them, have faithfully registered and transmitted unto us.

Ver. 4. *We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*] Who will not be so treacherous as to lose the memory of them in our days; but diligently propagate them to posterity: endeavouring that all future generations may understand, how much the Lord deserves to be praised, for the mighty and stupendous works which he hath done in former ages.

Ver. 5. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.*] And, indeed, when God gave us the law, he strictly charged our forefathers, and made a particular injunction about it, which he frequently repeated (Deut. iv. vi. xi. see the Argument); that they should be careful to leave the knowledge of these things as a sacred legacy, or inheritance, unto their children.

Ver. 6. *That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children.*] In order to the conveying them, by their hands, to the next generation; who were then unborn: who should be taught also, when they were grown up, to deliver them with the same diligence to their descendants; and so preserve the memory of them to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 7. *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments.*] To the end, that they might learn by such wonderful instances of his powerful goodness, to adhere unto him, and confide in him alone; and, by the constant commemoration of his benefits, be provoked religiously to observe his precepts.

Ver. 8. *And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright: and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.*] And take warning by the punishments inflicted on them, not to imitate the ingratitude of their forefathers, who were not only a refractory generation, but so fickle, that they fell off from God to the worship of idols, presently after they came out of Egypt: for they did not lay to heart what he had done for them, and so were never rightly disposed to his service; or if in a good fit they were inclined to it, they soon revolted from him.

Ver. 9. *The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*] What could be more shameful, than their base refusal to go and engage the Canaanites, when they were so well appointed for the fight; and were commanded by God, in whose power they had no confidence, to go up and take possession of the land? (Deut. i. 26.) unless it were their foul cowardice when they did engage them against his command; (ver. 43, 44.) and the Ephraimites themselves, though a valiant tribe, and excellent archers, ran away, and were chased in a shameful manner by their enemies.

Ver. 10. *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.*] For they brake their word with God, (who therefore would not be with them, Numb. xiv. 43.) and would not be governed by *his* will, but by their own.

Ver. 11. *And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*] Never thinking of the illustrious works which their eyes had seen; and so distrusting his power, notwithstanding all the miracles, whereby he had demonstrated the greatness of it to them.

Ver. 12. *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*] Nor were the next generation any better; though the memory was then fresh of that heap of wonders, which their fathers saw him do publicly: not in a corner, but in all the land of Egypt; yea, in and about the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 13. *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as a heap.*] From whence when he had delivered them, and they were in great distress at the Red Sea, he made it give way to them, that they might walk through it on dry ground: the fluid water swelling into little hills, (Exod. xv. 8.) which stood like a solid wall on either hand, to secure them in that dangerous passage, (Exod. xiv. 22.)

Ver. 14. *In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.*] Through which he conducted them, as he did at all other times, by a glorious cloud: whose dark side served also in the day-time, for a shadow from the scorching rays of the sun; and its bright side in the night, for a torch to guide them when they travelled; or if they rested, to light them in their tents.

Ver. 15. *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave*

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them drink as out of the great depths.] And when they wanted water in the wilderness, he brought it out of the rocks (which he commanded Moses to smite more than once); first at Rephidim, (Exod. xvii. 6.) and then in Kadesh, (Numb. xx. 8. 11.) and they had it in such plenty, both for themselves and their cattle, as if it had been a great pond or lake.

Ver. 16. *He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*] And yet it was no standing, but a flowing water; which ran continually out of the dry rock as out of its fountain, in several streams; or rather, like unto rivers; which followed them in their travels.

Ver. 17. *And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness.*] But all these miraculous works did not alter their depraved nature, which broke out into new and greater provocations; in that very place, where, without the singular providence of their most high Benefactor, they had all been starved.

Ver. 18. *And they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust.*] For they were not content with the bountiful provision which he had made for them, (Exod. xvi.) but muttered within themselves against him: and wished, if he was so powerful and kind as was pretended, that he would give them a new proof of it; by sending them meat to satisfy their wanton appetite.

Ver. 19. *Yea, they spake against God: they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*] And, at last, they openly declared that distrust of his power which was in their hearts; saying, Is God able to make us a feast here in this barren wilderness? (Numb. xi. 4, 5, &c.)

Ver. 20. *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*] It is true, he hath brought water out of a rock for us in great abundance (which perhaps was lodged there before in the caverns of it, and might have flowed out of itself); but can he give us more substantial bread, (not such light stuff as this manna is, which he also hath sent us, Numb. xi. 6.) here where no corn grows? and make an ample provision for all this multitude, of such flesh as this place doth not afford?

Ver. 21. *Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel.*] Which rude and insolent language highly incensed the Divine displeasure: so that he sent lightning from heaven (Numb. xi. 1.) to consume those whom he had before cherished: and he resolved also to punish them more severely, before he had done with them, (ver. 33.)

Ver. 22. *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.*] Because they had so mean an opinion of him, that they durst not confide in him, and commend themselves to his good providence; to preserve and conduct them safe to Canaan.

Ver. 23. *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.*] No, not after such extraordinary benefits as they had received from him: for he had undertaken in a miraculous manner (as is fit to be more particularly remembered) to dispense food to them from above, and to make the clouds the granary, whose doors he opened to them.

Ver. 24. *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*] And, instead of rain (to make the earth with long labour become fruitful), to send showers of manna out of the air, (Exod. xvi. 4.) which was a kind of corn ready prepared for them, (Numb. xi. 8, 9.)

Ver. 25. *Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.*] There was not a man among that vast multitude, but was fed with that strong and hearty, or rather princely, food; brought to them from the habitation, and by the ministry, of angels. This was their daily entertainment, as long as their travels in the wilderness lasted; and they had it in such abundance, that none of them could pretend they were not sufficed, (Exod. xvi. 16, 17. 35.)

Ver. 26. *He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven; and by his power he brought in the south wind.*] And therefore it was not to satisfy their hunger, but to reprove their unbelief, that he was pleased to comply with their desires; and, when the wind blew violently out of the east, turned it by his power into the south:

Ver. 27. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.*] Which brought a great cloud of quails (a delicious bird) from the coasts about the Red Sea: which (either tired with long flight, or beaten down with the wind) came pouring down like showers of rain; and lay on the ground, as thick as the dust or the sand on the sea-shore, from whence they came, (Numb. xi. 31.)

Ver. 28. *And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.*] There was no need of labour, or of any art, to catch them; neither needed they go far to take them up: for they dropped down in the midst of their camp; and lay also many miles round it, in such heaps, that they, who would, might fetch enough to serve them for a whole month, (Numb. xi. 20. 31.)

Ver. 29. *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire.*] So they had not only a taste of his liberality, but were glutted and crammed with them: for he satisfied their longings to the full.

Ver. 30. *They were not estranged from their lust: but while the meat was yet in their mouths.*] And they were not hindered from eating as much as they pleased; nor was this diet become at all nauseous to them; but they greedily feasted on these birds to the end of the month: and at that very time had these sweet morsels in their mouths, (Numb. xi. 33.)

Ver. 31. *The wrath of God came upon them, und slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.*] When the Divine vengeance seized on them, by a very great pestilence, (Numb. xi. 33.) which swept away the strongest and goodliest persons that were in Israel.

Ver. 32. *For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.*] But these punishments wrought no more change in their hearts than his benefits, for they added new sins to all the former; and were not moved by any of his wonderful works, to believe that he was able to bring them into the land of promise, (Numb. xiv. 2—4.)

Ver. 33. *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*] For which cause he resolved they should never come thither, but be consumed in the wilderness: (Numb. xiv. 28. 33, &c.) where, though they travelled up and down very much and long, yet it was to no purpose; for they were never the nearer to their journey's end, nor were ever free from one plague or other, till they were utterly destroyed.

Ver. 34. *When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God.*] They re-

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lented, indeed, sometimes, and when God cut off some of them, the rest began to deprecate his displeasure: (Numb. xiv. 39, 40.) and, by promising amendment, most earnestly sought to recover his favour.

Ver. 35. *And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer.*] And professed that they would trust in God hereafter for safety and deliverance: who they acknowledged was superior to all other gods, and had been their mighty redeemer.

Ver. 36. *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.*] But all this was little more than speaking him fair, while they lay under his correcting hand: and they did not sincerely intend to do as they promised, when it was removed.

Ver. 37. *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.*] For their hearts were not rightly disposed, nor firmly resolved to adhere unto him; as appears by their frequent revolts from their engagements; which they never faithfully observed, but as constantly broke, as they renewed their covenant with him, (Numb. xvi. 3. xx. 3, 4. xxi. 5. 7. xxv. 1, 2, &c.)

Ver. 38. *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*] Yet he was so full of compassion, that after he had threatened utterly to destroy them, (Numb. xiv. 11, 12.) he remitted very much of the severity of the sentence; and did not cut them off at once, (ver. 15. 17, 18.) but very often spared them when they deserved to be punished; or when he punished them, did it less than their deserts.

Ver. 39. *For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*] For he considered how frail they were, and that they could not continue long (though he did not snatch them away), but would moulder of themselves into dust; and vanish like a blast of wind, which makes a bustle and noise for a little time, and then is dispersed and heard of no more.

Ver. 40. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert?*] How many times, before this terrible threatening, did they provoke him to anger in the wilderness? (Numb. xiv. 22.) and afterward did things exceeding offensive to him, in other parts of the desert? (Numb. xvi. xx. xxi. xxv.)

Ver. 41. *Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.*] Being so vilely ungrateful, as to talk of returning into Egypt; (Numb. xiv. 4.) or requiring, upon every occasion, new proofs of his power: nay, questioning whether it could do all things, though he had wrought so many wonders; and appointing him, who had so often shewn himself to be incomparably greater than all other gods, what he should do, (as I said before, ver. 19, 20.) if he intended to have them believe on him.

Ver. 42. *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.*] For they quite forgot (this was the reason of their naughtiness, ver. 11, 12, which is fit again to be repeated), or never laid to heart, the mighty things he had done for them: especially that memorable time, when he, by his power alone, delivered them from the tyranny of Pharaoh, who most miserably oppressed them.

Ver. 43. *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.*] They did not seriously ponder the evident demonstration he gave of his uncontrollable power, in the miraculous judgments which he sent upon the Egyptians; even upon the court of Pharaoh, and the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 44. *And had turned their rivers into blood, and their floods, that they could not drink.*] When, for instance, he left them no water to quench their thirst; by turning the river Nile, (Exod. vii. 17. 19, 20.) with all the streams that were derived from it, and all their ponds and pools of water, into blood.

Ver. 45. *He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.*] And sent an infinite swarm of the most pestilent, and to them the most odious sort of flies, (Exod. viii. 21, 22.) which bit the Egyptians, as they used to do their dogs: as not long before he had sent such an army of frogs to invade all places, (ver. 3. 8, 9, &c.) and so to spoil their meat and drink, and every thing else, that if this plague had lasted, they must have left their country, or not have lived.

Ver. 46. *He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.*] After which he exposed the fruits of the earth, for which they had taken long pains, to be devoured by various kinds of locusts; with which the whole country was so overspread, that nothing else but they were to be seen upon the face of the earth. (Exod. x. 5.)

Ver. 47. *He destroyed the vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost.*] Which had been miserably harassed before, by storms of hail, both small and great: whereby not only the grapes and such-like fruit were smitten down, but the trees themselves (for instance, the vines, and the wild fig-trees) quite killed, and corrupted at the very root, (Exod. ix. 18, 19. 25.)

Ver. 48. *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunder-bolts.*] For there was a dreadful thunder, and lightning mixed together with it; which let no living creature escape, but destroyed even the cattle and the flocks, which were left abroad in the field, (Exod. ix. 22, 23, &c.)

Ver. 49. *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*] Many other ways he plagued them, which were tokens of his severest displeasure; by a grievous murrain, by fiery boils, by a most dismal darkness, (Exod. ix. 10.) till at length he sent evil angels, (who had frighted them in that darkness, Wisd. xvii. 3.) as the ministers of his heavy wrath.

Ver. 50. *He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence.*] Which irresistibly and speedily seized on them, wheresoever he found them; and spared not their lives: but took away the first-born of all their cattle by a pestilential disease, (Exod. xii. 30.)

Ver. 51. *And smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.*] As well as the first-born of all their children (the prop of their families, in whom the hope of future succession was principally laid), throughout the dwellings of the posterity of Cham, the father of the Egyptians, (Gen. x. 6. Exod. xii. 30.)

Ver. 52. *But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*] And by that means brought forth his people from among them, (Exod. xii. 31.) as peaceably as a shepherd doth his sheep out of

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their folds, (not so much as a dog moving his tongue against them, Exod. xi. 7.) and then directed them the way they should go in the wilderness, (Exod. xiii. 18. 21.) where he graciously provided for them.

Ver. 53. *And he led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*] He conducted them securely, even through the Red Sea, without any apprehension of danger, (Exod. xiv. 19. 22.) but overwhelmed Pharaoh and his followers, in that very path where *they* travelled in safety.

Ver. 54. *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*] And never ceased his care over them (notwithstanding all their provocations), till he brought them into his holy land; and (in the issue) to this Mount Zion: which, not their prowess, but his mighty power, by the hand of David, won for them, (2 Sam. v. 6, &c.)

Ver. 55. *He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*] And after he had expelled the old inhabitants, who were not able to stand before them, (Josh. xii.) he distributed, by lot, to every tribe their portion of land, which they should inherit, (Josh. xiv.) and settled them in a quiet possession of it, (Josh. xxi. 43, 44.)

Ver. 56. *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies.*] Yet, after so many, and so great benefits, they behaved themselves no better, in that good land, than they had done in the wilderness: but as soon as Joshua and the elders were dead, (Judg. ii. 7. 10.) they disbelieved the threatenings of their law, and would make a trial whether they were true or not; provoking the great Lord of all the world, by slighting his commandments, which he had so strictly enjoined them to observe.

Ver. 57. *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*] They imitated their forefathers, both in their frequent apostacies from God, and in their falseness to their promises, when they pretended to repent of them; (Judg. ii. 13. 18, 19. iii. 7, &c.) having depraved minds and hearts, which (like an ill-made bow, that never sends the arrow to the mark) would turn aside into crooked ways, and not be directed according to the will of God.

Ver. 58. *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*] For they highly incensed him, by their altars and images, (Judg. vi. 25.) which they built after the manner of the heathen, (Numb. xxii. 41.) in the high places; where they worshipped a number of false gods, (Judg. x. 6.) to his great offence and dishonour.

Ver. 59. *When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.*] Which was so notorious, that the Judge of the world could not but take notice of it, and severely punish it; by abandoning that people, for whom he had done such wonders, into the hands of the Syrians, the Moabites, the Midianites, Philistines, and the children of Ammon (see the book of Judges), who made them as contemptible unto others, as they were loathsome unto him.

Ver. 60. *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men.*] Insomuch that, at last, he quite forsook the city of Shiloh, where, in his tabernacle, he had been graciously pleased to be present with them, (1 Sam. iv. 3, 4.) and would never return unto it any more, (Jer. vii. 12. and see Argument of Psal. lxviii.)

Ver. 61. *And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies' hand.*] Nay, he let the ark of the covenant, the special token of his presence with them, from whence his power was wont to appear most gloriously for them, not only fall into their hands; but be carried away captive by the Philistines, (1 Sam. iv. 11. 22. v. 1.)

Ver. 62. *He gave his people over also to the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.*] Whose sword slew a great number of his people; (1 Sam. iv. 10.) so exceeding angry was he with those, whom he had formerly taken into his special care, above all other nations, (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.)

Ver. 63. *The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.*] For it was by his Divine vengeance, more than the Philistines' valour, that they lost abundance of brave young men; the very flower of their army: by which means many of their virgins were constrained to remain unmarried; and they that found husbands were fain to omit all tokens of joy, in a time of public sorrow.

Ver. 64. *Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.*] For some of their priests, who were peculiarly consecrated to God's service, were slain in this battle, (1 Sam. iv. 11.) and their wives, oppressed with grief, did not long survive, to make any public funeral for them, (ver. 20.)

Ver. 65. *Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.*] The Lord himself also (who was wont to fight for us) seemed no more concerned in all these calamities, which befel both us and our religion, than a mighty commander is at that which is done to his army when he is asleep, or overcome with wine: till at last, like such a great warrior (who being awaked calls for his arms, and charges the enemy with greater fury), he vindicated his honour in a terrible manner, and made a very great destruction among them, (1 Sam. v. 9. 11.)

Ver. 66. *And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts; he put them to a perpetual reproach.*] For, besides the fall of Dagon before the ark, he smote several cities of the Philistines, with a grievous sort of hemorrhoids; whereof many died, and the rest languished under most miserable torments: (1 Sam. v. 6. 9. 12.) the monuments of which they themselves were forced to make, and send back with the ark; to his great glory, and their eternal reproach, (vi. 3, 4. 9.)

Ver. 67. *Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim.*] Yet he would not return to Shiloh again (which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph), nor have the ark of his presence placed there any more.

Ver. 68. *But chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion, which he loved.*] But first it was brought to Kirjathaim, (1 Sam. vi. 21.) a city of the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 6.) where he resolved hereafter to have his special residence: and so from thence (after a short stay at the house of Obed-Edom) unto Mount Zion, (1 Chron. xiii. 6. xvi. 1. 3. 29.) which he preferred before the hill of Kirjathaim, (1 Sam. vii. 1.) or any other place in all the country.

Ver. 69. *And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.*] There Solomon

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built him a stately temple, which, as it was a high and lofty fabric, so was not moveable like his former habitation; but remained perpetually fixed, like the earth on which it stood.

Ver. 70. *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds.*] For as he had rejected Shiloh, and chosen Zion for the place of his dwelling; so he had likewise rejected Saul, and chosen David (the father of Solomon) to be the king of his people: a man, who served him as faithfully in that office, as he had done his father in keeping of his sheep.

Ver. 71. *From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*] From that mean employment he took him, and raised him to the highest charge and dignity; that the care he had employed in looking after the ewes, and their lambs when they should fall, he might exercise in governing his people; and endeavouring that they, whom he had chosen for his own peculiar inheritance, did no way miscarry.

Ver. 72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*] And he did not deceive his expectation; but governed them with equal integrity and prudence: never designing any thing but their good; and dexterously accomplishing whatsoever he designed.

PSALM LXXIX.

A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was penned, in all probability, upon the same occasion with the seventy-fourth; *viz.* the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: see what I have said there, in the Argument of that Psalm; and it will appear altogether unlikely, that this should have respect to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes: as many imagine, and among the rest Theodoret: which is the more strange, because the same reason he gives there why the seventy-fourth Psalm doth not belong to those times, (which he repeats again upon Psal. lxxx. 17.) lies as strongly against the application of this Psalm to the fury and rage wherewith that prince fell upon the Jewish nation. Whose miserable calamity under Nebuchadnezzar we find bewailed by Jeremiah, who then lived, (Jer. x. 25.) in the very words of the sixth and seventh verses of this Psalm; which is some indication that they both belong to the same matter: but whether Jeremiah took them from Asaph, or Asaph from him, I cannot certainly determine. The latter is most likely; because this Psalm seems to have been written after that desolation had for some time continued.

We read, indeed, in the first book of Maccabees, (vii. 16, 17.) two other verses of this Psalm, (*viz.* 2, 3.) applied to the slaughter of threescore of the devouter sort of Jews, presently after Antiochus's death. But that author quotes them, it is plain, as words which had been written in former days; and by him only made use of to his purpose: which was to shew, that the same cruelties were in great part acted over again, which their fathers had seen at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.*] O God, the supreme judge of the world, thou art not ignorant, we know, of our calamity, for it comes by thy order; but give us leave to represent unto thy majesty, the sad condition of the people and place which were once very dear unto thee; for profane nations have not only invaded our (or rather thy) country, to which thou hast a peculiar title, but polluted thy own house, which was separated to thy service alone; and laid it, together with Jerusalem, in ruinous heaps.

Ver. 2. *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.*] Under which thy servants the priests, and other holy men, whom they have slain, could not have the honour to be buried; nor obtain the common civility of a grave: but the dead bodies of those whom thou lovedst, they have barbarously exposed to be devoured by ravenous beasts and birds.

Ver. 3. *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.*] For they valued the shedding of their blood no more than the pouring out of water: which flowed in such abundance about Jerusalem, that they left not men enough alive to take care of the interment of the dead.

Ver. 4. *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*] And we that remain lead a most despicable life, being not only scorned and abused, but openly derided, and made the sport of the Edomites and other nations, which formerly stood in awe of us.

Ver. 5. *How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*] And, which is saddest of all, we have long complained of this, and find no relief; but only in our most passionate cries to thee, O Lord: the effects of whose just anger and jealousy we groan under (because we have forsaken thee, and been unfaithful to our covenant with thee), but hope they will not always last; nor proceed to make an utter end of us.

Ver. 6. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*] Pour them out rather (in as full a measure, and with as little pity, as they did our blood, ver. 3.) upon the Babylonians: who, though they have conquered many kingdoms, do not acknowledge thee at all, nor ascribe their successes to thy power: but to their idols whom they serve, and honour with that worship which is due to thee alone.

Ver. 7. *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.*] They have been the instruments, indeed, of thy vengeance; but have executed it with such cruelty, that, not content with the conquest of us, they have sought our total extirpation: having depopulated our country, and made that pleasant land a wilderness; which thou gavest to Jacob and his seed for their habitation.

Ver. 8. *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.*] O let not his virtue, and the covenant thou madest with him, be forgotten; when thou reckonest with us for the sins of our forefathers; the punishment of which we beseech thee that we may bear no longer: speed our deliverance, good Lord; and how unworthy soever we be,

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let thy tender compassion prevail with thee, to save us from utter ruin, which is very near; so few, so broken and spent we are, unless seasonably prevented by thy mercy.

Ver. 9. *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.*] Send us that seasonable help, O God, from whom alone we expect it, and have heretofore very often received it; for it will tend much to the honour of thy almighty goodness (which in former times was much celebrated, but of late hath been exceedingly disparaged) to save us now, when none is able to preserve us: upon that account be pleased to pass by our sins, and to interpose for our deliverance; lest thou suffer together with us.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.*] While the idolatrous nations utter this insolent language (which is exceeding grievous, nay, insupportable, to us), If their God be so great in himself, and so kind to them, as they pretend; why doth he not take their part, and appear for their deliverance? O that thou wouldest put them to silence, by taking such an open and remarkable vengeance on these blasphemous nations for the blood they have shed; that not only we, but all the world, may see, thou hast a care of us thy servants.

Ver. 11. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.*] Let the sighs and groans of those who lie in prison be as prevalent with thee as these prayers: and magnify thy power by preserving the lives of those whom they have condemned to die.

Ver. 12. *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.*] And when thou hast done with the Babylonians, reckon with our neighbours also, who have insulted over us, and derided us, or rather have spoken so reproachfully of thee, O God, that they justly deserve, not only to be paid home in their kind, but to be made seven times more contemptible than we have been.

Ver. 13. *So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.*] So we thy people, being conducted again to our land, and happily restored to live under thy government there, will never cease to give thanks unto thee, for thy benefits bestowed upon us: and be careful to transmit the memory of them to those who shall come after us, that all future generations may perpetuate thy praises.

PSALM LXXX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is something of kin to the former; deprecating the displeasure of the Almighty in a time of great calamity. Which, as all that I have met withal think, was either in the captivity of Judah and Benjamin by Nebuchadnezzar; or of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. But it seems to me rather to have been penned between these two, in the time of Hezekiah: who had wrote a letter you find (2 Chron. xxxi. 6.) to the remnant that were escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria; especially to Ephraim and Manasseh, the tribes nearest to them, that they would come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and keep the Passover with them: which summons several of them obeyed; (ver. 11. 18.) and kept the feast as long again as they were wont, (ver. 23.) And when this was finished, they all went through the country, and threw down all the high places and altars that they found: not only in Judah, but in Benjamin also, Ephraim, and Manasseh, (2 Chron. xxxi. 1.)

But after this happy settlement, you read there, (xxxii. 1.) that the land was invaded by Sennacherib, and sorely distressed; to the great discouragement, no doubt, of those who had joined in the reformation: which moved Asaph (mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30. see the Argument of Psal. lxxiii.) most earnestly to beseech God (ver. 2. of this Psalm), that he would be pleased to stir up himself before Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as Benjamin (who was so linked to Judah, that part of Jerusalem and of the temple stood in that tribe); and let them see, by a remarkable deliverance, that their zeal for the purity of their religion was acceptable to him.

Another reason, indeed, there may be given (which I have not omitted in my Paraphrase) why these three are joined together, rather than any other, because they were the tribes (as we read in the second of Numbers), who, when they were in the wilderness, always marched behind the tabernacle when it moved; and had that part where the propitiatory was, from whence God sent his oracles, and the tokens of his power, just before them. But then there is this to be added, to make it probable that this Psalm was not penned in the time of the captivity, because, as then there was no ark; nor did God *sit between the cherubims* (concerning which phrase the learned reader may see Lud. de Dieu upon 1 Sam. iv. 4.) as he is said here to do; nor were Ephraim and Manasseh then mixed with them, that we read of: so, first of all, it is too full of elegancies for that time of utter desolation; and, secondly, the Greek expressly calls it, *A Psalm concerning the Assyrian;* (who is the *wild boar*, I suppose, that broke into God's vineyard, mentioned ver. 13.) and lastly, Hezekiah, I observe, applies himself to God (in the time of that distress by the king of Assyria), in the very language of the Psalmist; and begins his prayer just as Asaph doth here, to him *that sits between the cherubims,* desiring him to incline his ear to his requests, (2 Kings xix. 15, 16. Isa. xxxvii. 16, 17.)

It was delivered to the chief master of music, to be sung as the sixtieth Psalm, upon the instruments of six strings: which were wont to be used in solemn thanksgivings (see the Argument of that Psalm); for he nothing doubted God would hear their prayers, and destroy Sennacherib: or, perhaps, it was ordered afterward to be sung in that manner.

Ver. 1. *GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*] O thou, who art the ruler and protector of thy people Israel, who didst long ago give a famous instance of thy power, in preserving Joseph, when he fell, like an innocent lamb, among a company of wolves, (Gen. xxxvii. 18, &c.) and conducting him to the highest preferment; reject not our humble petitions, which we put up unto thee

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in the like distress; but shew that thou favourest us, by some illustrious token of thy presence among us, in thy holy place, from whence thou canst send angels to defend and deliver us, (2 Kings xix. 35.)

Ver. 2. *Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us.*] Let the posterity of Joseph, who beheld heretofore so many enemies fall before thee, when they attended upon the ark of thy presence in the wilderness, (Numb. ii. 18. 20. 22.) and have lately been very zealous in thy service, (2 Chron. xxx. 1. xxxi. 1.) see thy power to be as great as ever (though for some time it hath not appeared at all for us): and that thou art as forward, in due time, to grant us a glorious deliverance.

Ver. 3. *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*] Restore us, O God, to our former happiness; and for that end restore us into thy favour: and then there will soon be an end of our calamities.

Ver. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?*] For what can the greatest armies (2 Kings xviii. 17.) do against thee, who art the supreme Lord of all, the absolute commander of the hosts of heaven? whose help we have most importunately implored, and long waited for, as men impatient to see our enemies so prevalent; though hitherto thou hast been so exceeding angry with us, that thou hast not heard the prayers of thy people.

Ver. 5. *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.*] But hast turned our joyful feasts unto fasting and weeping; and our plenty into scarcity of all things, but only of tears: which we pour out in large measure; when we think of the danger we are in, to perish by famine and by thirst, (2 Chron. xxxii. 21.)

Ver. 6. *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours; and our enemies laugh among themselves.*] Our neighbours, the Edomites and others, either pick quarrels with us, or strive among themselves who shall make the greatest booty of us: while our enemies, that besiege us, mock at our inability to help ourselves; and at our confidence which we place in thee, (2 Kings xviii. 22, 23. 2 Chron. xxxii. 15.)

Ver. 7. *Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*] Convince them, O Lord, that it is not vainly placed, by restoring us again to our former happiness: which it is easy for thee to do, who hast all the hosts of heaven at thy command; if thou wilt but be pleased to favour us (as we again beseech thee thou wilt), and then no harm shall befal us.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*] We were once very dear unto thee, when thou didst transplant us, like a choice vine, out of Egypt into this country: from whence thou didst drive out the ancient inhabitants, that we might be settled in their place.

Ver. 9. *Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.*] Thou preparedst the way for us, making our terror fall upon them before we came, (Josh. ii. 9—11.) so that we easily expelled them; and being there firmly established, like a vine deeply rooted in a fruitful soil, we increased and multiplied, till we peopled all the land.

Ver. 10. *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.*] And as a rich vine covers the hill, on the side of which it is planted, or overtops the lofty cedars, which support it: so we obscured the splendour of the greatest kingdoms, and made mighty kings become tributaries to us, (1 Kings iv. 24.)

Ver. 11. *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.*] For our empire extended itself (just like such a luxuriant vine, which spreads its branches every way) from the Midland Sea to the river Euphrates, 1 Kings iv. 21. (See Psal. lxxii. 8.)

Ver. 12. *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?*] But now, alas! thou hast withdrawn thy protection from us; and we are left like a vineyard without its hedges: all our strong holds and fenced cities are taken; (2 Kings xviii. 3.) so that we lie open to be made a prey to every one that hath a mind to spoil us.

Ver. 13. *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*] The Assyrian king, like a wild boar, that breaks into a vineyard, treads down all under his feet, and seeks to root us up: there is no savage beast can make greater havoc among the vines, than his barbarous soldiers have done throughout all the land; which they have eaten up, (2 Kings xix. 29.)

Ver. 14. *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.*] Our only hope is, that thou, the great Lord of hosts, on whom the event of wars, as of all things else, depends, wilt be reconciled unto us, and drive him out again; deny us not this request, we beseech thee; but, though we be destitute of all help on earth, yet send us some from heaven; and, though very unworthy, yet graciously take us into thy care, and repair the breaches which they have made.

Ver. 15. *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.*] Be favourable to the remnant of us, which, by thy powerful preservation, is still left; like the root or stock of a vine, which may sprout out again: (2 Kings xix. 30, 31.) and especially to our king, whom thou hast endued with zeal and courageous resolution for thy service (2 Chron. xxx. 32.) and for our defence (xxxii. 5—8.)

Ver. 16. *It is burnt with fire; it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*] Great numbers of us are destroyed already, and may be compared to the numerous branches of that remaining stock, which, being cut off, are burnt with fire: and all the rest of us must perish, if thou wilt not be reconciled unto us, but still persevere in thy anger towards us.

Ver. 17. *Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.*] Which we beseech thee turn away; and be the mighty helper of our sovereign, who is dearly beloved by thee; of that excellent prince, whom thou hast endued with zeal and courageous resolution, for thy service, and for our defence and preservation, (ver. 15.)

Ver. 18. *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*] Which shall be an everlasting obligation upon us, never to revolt from thee to our former idolatry: do but free us from these deadly enemies and we will worship thee alone; and never cease to praise thee, and acknowledge that we owe our very lives to thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 19. *Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy*

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face to shine, and we shall be saved.] Hear us, O great Lord, who hast all the angels in heaven at thy command; hear us, we once more beseech thee, and restore us perfectly to our former happiness; and, in order to it, restore us to thy favour; and let there be a speedy end of all these calamities.

PSALM LXXXI.

To the chief Musician, upon Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

There was a special command of God, as the Psalmist here takes notice, (ver. 4.) for the making a joyful sound with trumpets, upon all the solemn days, especially their new-moons, (Numb. x. 10.) But more particularly upon the first day of the seventh month; which is called by this peculiar name, above all other days, *a day of blowing the trumpets*, i. e. from morning unto evening, (Numb. xxix. 1.) and *a memorial of blowing trumpets*, (Lev. xxiii. 24.) For this solemn day, I suppose, this Psalm was composed; and the reason is apparent why they were to blow with trumpets longer on this day than any other, because it was the first new-moon in the year (for, according to their old computation before they came out of Egypt, their year began on this day, as appears from Exod. xxiii. 16. xxxiv. 22. where the feast of in-gathering their fruits is said to be in the *revolution*, or *the end, of the year*); and God intended, it is possible, to awaken them (as Maimonides conjectures), to prepare themselves by strict inquiry into their lives, and by hearty repentance, for the great day of atonement, which was the tenth of this month.

But of what this blowing trumpets or cornets was a *memorial*, is not easy to resolve; the Hebrews themselves being at such a loss about it, that they are fain to go as far back as the deliverance of Isaac, and the offering a ram in his stead, for the reason of it. The clearest account of which, it seems to me, may be fetched from this Psalm; which plainly intimates, that the *blowing with trumpets* at that time, related to something which ensued upon their happy deliverance out of Egypt: which, though it began upon the first day of the first month, according to their new computation, (which took its original from that deliverance, in memory of which God ordained the feast of the Passover to begin on that day, Lev. xxiii. 6.) yet they had not a complete body of laws delivered to them by Moses, till the first day of the seventh month, which was the feast of blowing trumpets.

Moses received, indeed, several laws in the third month, (Exod. xix. 1. 3, &c.) on the third day whereof (ver. 11. 16. 19, 20.) God himself appeared on the top of Mount Sinai, with the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud and prolonged (to which I believe this feast hath respect), and spake the ten commandments; after which Moses delivered them a body of civil laws, (Exod. xxi.—xxiii.) But they did not know the manner of the Divine service, for which they came out of Egypt into the wilderness, till Moses had been twice forty days, one after the other, in the mount; and, likewise (as several of the Jews understand those passages in Deut. ix. relating to this matter), had forty days more bewailed their sin in making the golden calf. Which sixscore days, if we add to the time between their coming out of Egypt, and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and to the six days which passed before Moses was called up into the cloud, it will fall out exactly to be the first day of the seventh month, when he began to give orders for the building of the tabernacle, and making all things belonging to God's house; according to the direction he had received in the mount. I am sure this was the precise time of their setting up the altar, and beginning to offer burnt-offerings, after their return from the captivity at Babylon, before the foundation of the temple was laid. For you read, Ezra iii. 1. 6. it was upon the first day of the seventh month; in the middle of which they also kept the feast of tabernacles, as Moses had appointed; in memory of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, under the government of the Almighty, unto which the Psalmist here hath respect in the next words, which we translate *in the time appointed*, that is, at the *full moon* (as De Dieu hath demonstrated), on which the feast of tabernacles was kept in this seventh month: at which feast Solomon dedicated his temple, 1 Kings viii. 2. where it is called the *feast:* and may well be meant here in the last words of the third verse of this Psalm, our *solemn feast-day*. Unless we take both the *new moon feast*, and the *full moon* (*i. e.* feast of tabernacles), to be meant, and translate it *on the day of our feast*. The same first day also was kept holy by Nehemiah, with great solemnity, viii. 1. 8—10. where you find how the book of the law was distinctly read to the people on this day, and the sense of it explained: so that they came the next day again for further instruction, (ver. 13.)

Now that they might be more mindful of those Divine benefits which in this month they commemorated, more than in any other month in the year, Asaph (in the days of David, it is likely) composed this Psalm, and directed it to the master of music, to be sung (as the eighth Psalm upon *Gittith*) in the beginning of it, upon the feast of trumpets. And he introduces God himself (before whom they were summoned, as I said, by these trumpets to appear), instructing them in the end of this solemnity; and complaining of their forgetfulness of his benefits, in giving them so great a deliverance out of the Egyptian slavery; and of their hard-heartedness, in preferring their own inventions, and the miseries they brought thereby upon themselves, before his counsels, and the happiness he intended for them. Which happiness is expressed in the last verse, by *satisfying them with honey out of the rock:* concerning which the learned may consult Bochartus, de Sacris Animal. par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12.

Ver. 1. *SING aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*] Sing praises aloud unto God, to whose mighty power alone we owe the deliverance which we now commemorate: shout with the voice of triumph, in honour of him, who was so good unto your forefathers.

Ver. 2. *Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp, with the psaltery.*] Offer to him your cheerful hymns; and, to complete the melody, and express the greatness of your joy, let some with timbrels, others with the pleasant harp, and others with the psaltery, celebrate the memory of his mercies.

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Ver. 3. *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day.*] And let the priests especially (Numb. x. 8.) take care to blow with the trumpets at the sacred solemnity; on the first day of the seventh month, the principal new moon in the year (which is attended with another feast at the full moon of this month): that all the people may call to mind the trump of God, (Exod. xix. 16. 19.) which our fathers heard, at his dreadful appearance on Mount Sinai, to give his law unto them.

Ver. 4. *For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*] For thus hath the Lord decreed in that law; where the God of our father Jacob requires this service of us, (Lev. xxiii. 24, &c.)

Ver. 5. *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt; where I heard a language that I understood not.*] This he appointed unto the children of Joseph, as well as the rest of the tribes of Israel, for a perpetual memorial of his benefits: when he, going out over all the land of Egypt, (Exod. xi. 4. xii. 23. 29.) and destroying all the first-born, forced them to let us depart into the wilderness; where we heard, to our great astonishment (for we were never before acquainted with it), the voice of God.

Ver. 6. *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.*] Who, considering with himself what a title he had to our service (having taken off the heavy burdens which the Egyptians laid upon our backs, and rid our hands of those sordid and dirty employments, wherein they made us labour),

Ver. 7. *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.*] Admonished us to this effect, saying; You cried to me by reason of your cruel servitude under Pharaoh's task-masters, (Exod. ii. 23.) and I delivered you out of it; (iii. 8.) and again answered your prayers, when you cried unto me in a new distress, at the Red Sea, (xiv. 10. 13.) but confounded the Egyptians, with thunder and lightning out of the cloudy pillar, (ver. 24, 25. Psal. lxxvii. 18.) After all which, I might well expect you should depend upon me: but presently found you full of distrust and infidelity at the waters of strife; (Exod. xvii. 7.) where I gave you a new proof of my power.

Ver. 8. *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me.*] Of which, if you will still enjoy the benefit, then give ear, O my people, and I will solemnly declare my will; and give a severe charge unto you, O ye Israelites, if you resolve to be obedient to my admonitions.

Ver. 9. *There shall no strange god be in thee: neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*] Then this is the principal thing upon which all the rest depends; you shall not suffer any other gods to be acknowledged among you, but only me; (Exod. xx. 3. 23.) nor shall you worship the gods of other nations, (xxiii. 13. 24. 32.)

Ver. 10. *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*] For I, and I alone, am the living Lord, the eternal God; who gave a being to all things; and who am your peculiar benefactor; having brought you out of the Egyptian bondage: (Exod. xix. 4. xx. 2.) and if you will be faithful and obedient to me, enlarge your desires as far as you please, and I will satisfy them; for all the world is mine, (xix. 5. xxiii. 25.)

Ver. 11. *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*] But, notwithstanding their seeming compliance with him, and the fair promises they made him, (Exod. xix. 8. xx. 19. xxiv. 3. 7.) he presently complained (xxxii. 7—9. as I hear him still do at this day), My people would not be obedient to me; and Israel would not rest contented with me alone:

Ver. 12. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels.*] So, provoked by their long stubbornness, I took no farther care of them, but left them to do as they pleased; saying, Let them follow their own inventions.

Ver. 13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*] But it had been better for them to have adhered to me; who, out of my tender affection to their good, still wished, even when they were so refractory, that my people Israel had been so wise as to have followed my directions, and been led by my advice; and not their own foolish imaginations.

Ver. 14. *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*] Then I should in a short time have quelled all their enemies; and, by one victory after another, have quite destroyed those adversaries: which (since I brought them into Canaan) have often miserably afflicted and oppressed them, (Judg. ii. 2, 3. 14, 15. 19, 20. iii. 1, &c. iv. 2.)

Ver. 15. *The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.*] All that maligned their prosperity, and set themselves against the design of the Lord, to make them victorious over their enemies, should have been so daunted, that they should have dissembled their inward hatred, and been forced, at least, to a counterfeit submission: but his people should have seen blessed days, and enjoyed a substantial and durable happiness without any interruption.

Ver. 16. *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*] He should have made their country exceeding fruitful, and fed them with the richest wheat: and I myself, saith the Lord, would have blessed thee with such plenty, that in the deserts thou shouldest have found the sweetest refreshments; and, without any care of thine, the bees should have laboured honey for thee, in the rocks, and holes of trees, and such-like places, (Deut. xxxii. 13. Judg. xiv. 8. 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26.)

PSALM LXXXII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

Though there had been a notable reformation made by Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, &c.) of those corruptions which had been growing in the supreme court of judicature at Jerusalem, as well as in the lesser in other cities, ever since the times of David and Solomon; (who took care to see justice done, 1 Chron. xviii. 14. 1 Kings iii. 9. 28.) yet it appears, by the frequent complaints of Isaiah, that when Hezekiah (in whose days that prophet lived) came to the crown, there was a general deprava-

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tion again; and that, notwithstanding the amendment he had made in matters of the Divine worship, (2 Chron. xxx. xxxi.) and his resolutions and endeavours, no question to reform the abuses which were in their civil judicatures, (as I have expounded Psal. lxxv. 2, 3.) they continued still exceeding corrupt. Insomuch that Isaiah calls their judges, *rulers of Sodom*, (Isa. i. 10. when he finds no fault with their religious services, ver. 11, 12, &c.) and says, their princes were rebellious, companions of thieves, loving gifts, and following after rewards, (ver. 23.)

Where it is evident he describes the judges in the highest court of all; who are called by the name of *princes* in several places, particularly in Jeremiah: who being condemned by the priests, and prophets, and people, as a man worthy to die, (Jer. xxvi. 8, 9.) was brought before the princes, (ver. 10, 11.) at whose bar he cleared himself so well, that they acquitted him, (ver. 16.)

And as there they are called *princes*, with respect to their superiority over the people, so here in this Psalm they are called *Elohim, gods*, in respect to the fountain of their power, which was from the Most High; who honoured them with his own name; which is so frequent for those of the supreme court, that some, not unreasonably, understand those words, (Judg. ix. 13.) which we render, *Cheers the heart of God and man*, in this manner; Wine alike cheers both princes and people, judges and clients, the meaner persons (called in this Psalm *Adam, man*, ver. 6, 7.) as well as the greatest, who, in opposition to them, are called *gods*. Whom Asaph (who lived in the time of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. see Psal. lxxiii.) admonishes to be more careful in their duty; and to remember that God observed them, and would judge them.

Ver. 1. *GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.*] Remember, O ye judges, whose ministers you are; (2 Chron. xix. 6.) and consider, that you are not so powerful, but God, who hath put you in his place, and honoured you with his name, (Exod. xxii. 28.) is far greater: and, as he is present in your court to observe what you do, so will call you to a strict account, and severely punish you, if you judge amiss.

Ver. 2. *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.*] How dare you then pronounce an unrighteous sentence? Is it not time to leave off your partiality? and no longer to favour a bad cause, because the man is rich and great; and can either give you a large bribe, if you will judge it for him; or do you a mischief, if you give sentence against him?

Ver. 3. *Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.*] Your duty is, to do equal justice to all men that come before you; and to take a particular care, that the poor and the fatherless do not suffer because they have no money to give, nor any friend to solicit, for the defence of a righteous cause: and that the men of low condition, and such as are reduced to very great want, be not condemned, when they are injuriously prosecuted, by those who are above them.

Ver. 4. *Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*] See that you protect and deliver him that is quite exhausted and miserably oppressed with poverty; let them not become a prey to violent men, who have no conscience; but put it out of their power to undo them.

Ver. 5. *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*] These are the constant admonitions which the men of God give the judges; but, alas! hitherto they have little prevailed. For they will not study the laws of God; or if they do, will not think it their interest to be governed by them: but are blinded by bribes, or by their corrupt affections, to do any thing that they would have them; insomuch that the foundations of the kingdom, which are justice and truth, are shaken; all things are in confusion, and in danger to come to utter ruin, (Isa. v. 23, 24, x. 1—3.)

Ver. 6. *I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.*] Hear therefore the sentence of God upon you (whose words these are); I have put my majesty upon you; and, though you be no more than other men in yourselves, have by my constitution raised you to such a dignity on earth, as my celestial ministers have in heaven.

Ver. 7. *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*] Yet this shall not privilege you in your unjust proceedings; but since you have no regard to me, nor to your office, I will have as little regard to you: for you shall perish like one of the common men, without any respect to your honour; and be thrown down from your seats, like the tyrants and cruel oppressors that have been before you.

Ver. 8. *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*] Let us see this sentence fulfilled, O God, the righteous judge; and do not suffer the insolent iniquity of these men any longer: but redress all those evils wherewith such men have filled not only this nation, but all the world; which belongs to thee, and thou wilt one day sure vindicate mankind, as the just owner of them, from the tyranny of those impious governors; who now abuse them, as if they had an absolute dominion over them.

PSALM LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

ARGUMENT.

It is the common opinion, that the combination of powerful enemies, against which they here implore the Divine assistance, was that mentioned in 2 Chron. xx. in the days of Jehoshaphat. The reason is, because the children of Lot, (ver. 8.) *viz.* the Moabites and Ammonites, (the ground of whose quarrel with the Jews is set down in Judg. xi.) seem to have been the principal in this confederacy, and the other but assistants; as it is plain they were in that invasion, (2 Chron. xx. 1.) And then the author of this Psalm, must be either Jahaziel, one of Asaph's posterity (upon whom you read there, ver. 14. the Spirit of the Lord then came), or some other in those days, whose proper name this was. Which is much more probable than their conjecture, who think the author was Asaph, in the days of David; who subdued, indeed, the Moabites and Edomites, and other neighbouring nations: but we do not read of any confederacy they made against him; much less that they sent as far as

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Assyria for help; or that they began the war, as the people here mentioned did.

The same may be said against the application of it to the conquests made in the days of Uzziah, over several people here mentioned, (2 Chron. xxvi. 6—8.) Or to the invasion made by Sennacherib king of Assyria: who did not join himself (as we read here, ver. 8.) with other nations; but by the forces of his own kingdom alone, as far as appears, came up against them.

There are those, indeed, that take in all the attempts made upon them, since that in Jehoshaphat's days, by several nations; the last of which was Assyria; whose king came to do that which the rest had not been able to effect: and then the author is easily found to be the same that I have named in the Argument of the foregoing, and many other Psalms. And which way soever we are pleased to determine the matter, it is plain, in general, that many nations, both near and remote, who had a hatred to the Jews, set themselves together, when this Psalm was penned, to destroy them: assaulting them not only severally, but conjunctly; entering into consultation also, and conspiring together how to effect it. Which hatred continuing after their return to their own land, from the captivity of Babylon, gave occasion to Theodoret to say (both in his preface to this Psalm, and upon the twelfth verse of it), that the Psalmist here complains of the opposition which several of their neighbours made to the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem.

But this seems more improbable than all the rest; many of those countries, here named, being before that time destroyed: and the Assyrians themselves (as he himself observes upon ver. 8.) being not then extant. Though whensoever this confederacy happened, there was very great reason for that solicitous and vehement importunity wherewith this Psalm begins.

Why it was called a *Song-Psalm*, see Psalm lxvii.

Ver. 1. *KEEP not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.*] O God, the supreme judge of the world, whose power is so great, that the united forces of all men on earth, or angels in heaven, are not to be compared with it; (2 Chron. xx. 6. 12.) who with one word of thy mouth canst dissipate this great army; do not refuse now to answer our prayers in this sore distress: O do not shut thy merciful ears to our cries, nor quietly see us perish, most mighty God.

Ver. 2. *For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.*] For we are surprised with a sudden invasion of numerous enemies (haters of thee and thy worship, as much as of our nation), who make a dreadful noise, like the waves of the sea, (2 Chron. xx. 2.) and proudly promising themselves a victory, insult as if they had already won it.

Ver. 3. *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.*] They have, with equal malice and subtilty, carried on a close design against thy people: and with great secrecy consulted how to destroy, not only us, whom thou hast hitherto wonderfully protected as thy jewels, but thy temple also; and the secret place wherein thou there dwellest.

Ver. 4. *They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.*] Come, say they one to another, let us agree and join all the power we have together; not merely to make a conquest of them, but for their utter extirpation, (2 Chron. xx. 11.) that there may be no mention hereafter in the world, of such a people as the commonwealth of Israel.

Ver. 5. *For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against thee.*] And accordingly ten several nations are combined heartily in this design; and how different soever their inclinations are upon other accounts, they have all entered into a solemn league, and made a covenant of mutual help, and of employing their joint endeavours, totally to subvert that government and religion which thou hast established.

Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes.*] Those warlike nations, the Edomites and Ishmaelites, who dwell in tents, are engaged in this enterprise: and so are the Moabites, and others descended from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael.

Ver. 7. *Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.*] With whom are united our neighbours the Gebalites, (Josh. xiii. 5.) the Ammonites; our old enemies the Amalekites and Philistines; and they that dwell in and about the famous city of Tyre.

Ver. 8. *Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.*] And, to add to their strength, they have called the powerful nation of the Assyrians into their association: on whose assistance the Moabites and Ammonites (the authors of this war) do principally rely.

Ver. 9. *Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon.*] The greater need we have of thy assistance, and with the greater earnestness we beseech thee to make them an example of human weakness: by defeating them, as thou didst that vast army of the Midianites and their confederates, (Judg. vi. 5. vii. 12.) whom Gideon overthrew with no greater power than three hundred men; (Judg. vii. 21, 22. compared with 2 Chron. xx. 23.) and as thou didst in former times to that famous captain Sisera, (who fell by the hand of a woman, Judg. iv. 21.) and to Jabin his king: who, together with his army, was swept away in the brook of Kishon, (Judg. iv. 21. 24. v. 21.)

Ver. 10. *Which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth.*] A great slaughter there was of them near En-dor, (compare Judg. v. 19. with Josh. xvii. 11.) where their carcasses lay and rotted; and served instead of dung, to fatten and enrich the earth.

Ver. 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb; yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna.*] Let their princes and commanders fall like Oreb and Zeeb: (Judg. vii. 25.) and their kings not be able to save themselves by flight; but be taken and slain, like Zebah and Zalmunna, (Judg. viii. 12. 21.)

Ver. 12. *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.*] Who came with a design, (Judg. vi. 3—5.) as these nations do now, (2 Chron. xx. 10, 11.) to possess themselves of that pleasant land, wherein thou dwellest among us in thy holy habitation.

Ver. 13. *O my God, make them like a wheel: as the stubble before the wind.*] O my God, whose goodness hath never failed us in distress; let them not be able to stand their ground; but put them to flight, and make them run as

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swiftly as a ball down a hill; disperse all their forces like the chaff, when it is blown about with a furious wind.

Ver. 14. *As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire.*] Blast and consume them utterly; as the lightning, or the scorching rays of the sun in a long drought do the leaves of the forest trees, or the grass upon the mountains, (Joel i. 19.)

Ver. 15. *So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.*] Raise a dreadful tempest to affright them; and pursue them so with thy vengeance, that they may be shattered and driven away instantly, as in a whirlwind: put them into such a panic fear that they may not know which way to turn, but clash against one another in a terrible confusion, (2 Chron. xx. 22, &c.)

Ver. 16. *Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.*] And make those that escape so ashamed at this disgraceful disappointment, that they may not be able to hold up their heads, nor deny thy power to be superior to theirs, but humbly seek thy favour.

Ver. 17. *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.*] This is the worst we wish them, notwithstanding their enmity to us; that they may be so astonished and confounded at their defeat, as never to recover any courage to assault us: nay, together with their credit and their courage, quite lose their power to give us any farther trouble.

Ver. 18. *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.*] And thereby be convinced, which they would not believe before, that thou art what thou art called, the true and only God, who givest being to all things; and art the supreme governor, not only of us, but of all the nations upon earth.

PSALM LXXXIV.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

It is uncertain to what times this Psalm belongs: they seem to have most reason on their side, who think it was composed upon the same occasion with the forty-second and forty-third, when David, forced from Jerusalem by the rebellion of his son Absalom, most passionately longed to be restored to the place of God's worship. But it may as well, or better, in my judgment, be thought to have been composed by some pious Levite in the country, when Sennacherib's army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered them from waiting upon the service of God at the temple: where he judged the lowest ministry, that of a porter (as we read ver. 10.) to be far more honourable than the highest preferment among pagan nations. And thus I shall take the liberty to expound it in my Paraphrase: pointing the reader to such places in the history of that sad time, as I think will explain some passages of this Psalm: which, after their freedom was restored, by the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the author of it delivered to the master of music in the temple, to be sung as the eighth Psalm. (See there.)

Ver. 1. *HOW amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!*] It is impossible to express the affection I have to thy dwelling-place, O Lord; who art attended there by the ministry of the heavenly host, (Isa. xxxvii. 16.) and needest none of our services.

Ver. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*] But we cannot live with any satisfaction, while we are absent from thee; for I am ready to faint away in ardent longings to tread again in the courts of the Lord's house: where my tongue and my hands, as well as my mind, would gladly be employed in the praises of our God; who in this excels all other, (2 Kings xix. 4. 16. 18.) that he lives for ever.

Ver. 3. *Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.*] It grieves me, O mighty Lord of all the heavenly hosts, whose subject I am, and infinitely engaged to thee, to see the very birds, who know nothing of thee, enjoy that liberty which is denied me: who am here lamenting my distance from thee, when the sparrows and the ring-doves have their constant residence at thy house; and there live so undisturbed, that they build their nests, and bring forth their young, in the rafters of it.

Ver. 4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*] O how happy are they who partake of such a privilege! who live so near thy house, and frequent it so much, as if it were their own! Their delightful employment is, with never-ceasing praises, to pay their thankful acknowledgments unto thee.

Ver. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.*] And happy also is that man (how mean soever his outward condition be) who, relying upon thy Divine protection, (Exod. xxxiv. 24.) goes up three times a year to the solemn feast at Jerusalem: or when he is debarred that liberty, as I now am, is one of those devout persons, whose hearts are more in the highways that lead thither, than at their own home.

Ver. 6. *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.*] Who travelling through the troublesome valley of Baca, where there is no water, pass it as cheerfully, as if it abounded with pleasant springs: and, depending on God, as the fountain of what they want, receive from him the blessing of plentiful and seasonable showers, to refresh them in their journey:

Ver. 7. *They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*] So that the whole company go from stage to stage, with an unwearied vigour; till they all present themselves before God, to receive his blessing in his temple, upon the hill of Zion.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*] O mighty Lord, who commandest all the heavenly hosts, which attend in that holy place, (and are far more numerous than the armies that invade us, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7.) make me one of that happy number; and restore me, O God, who deliveredst Jacob out of all his troubles, to the liberty of waiting upon thee there.

Ver. 9. *Behold, O God our Shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed.*] Look graciously upon me, O God, who hast hitherto been our protector against the most powerful enemies; and accept the prayer of our sovereign, who petitions thee still to be our defender, (2 Kings xix. 19.)

Ver. 10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thou-*

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sand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.] For one day spent in thy courts, is far more pleasant than a thousand in any other place; and I had rather lie at the gates of thy house, than live in the most splendid condition in idolatrous countries.

Ver. 11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*] For though our happiness be sometimes clouded, yet the Lord, like the sun, will dispel the darkness of affliction; and, having brought us out of a disconsolate condition, defend and secure us in a better: (2 Kings xx. 6.) the Lord will give those favour with others, and advance them to great honour; (2 Chron. xxxii. 22, 23.) he will never be sparing of his blessings, but heap them abundantly on those who sincerely do his will in all things, (2 Kings xviii. 5, 6. xx. 3.)

Ver. 12. *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*] O most mighty Lord, who commandest all the host of heaven, happy is that man, who, by his integrity, preserves this hope and confidence in thee; though, for the present, he be restrained from the delightful enjoyment of thee in thy temple.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

It is thought by many, that this Psalm was composed by some of the sons of Korah, after David's banishment from Jerusalem by his son Absalom, (called a captivity, as we read Psal. xiv. *ult.*) and his happy restoration to his kingdom; though not to such a settlement as they desired. But it may be as well, or better, applied to the miraculous providence which drove Sennacherib out of the land, (who had taken many captives, Isa. v. 13.) and restored them to the happy liberty, whose loss they bewailed in the Psalm foregoing.

Which way soever we understand it, the composure is such, that it might be much better used by them after their return from the captivity of Babylon, than at any other time: when they were infested with many enemies, who disturbed the peaceable enjoyment of their country and religion. And therefore it is possible it might be reviewed, if not made, in those days, and delivered to the chief master of music in the temple, to be sung presently after the foundation of it was laid, (Ezra iii. 10, 11, &c.) but the work hindered from proceeding by the opposition of their enemies. And so I shall interpret it.

Ver. 1. *LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*] Thou hast been exceeding kind unto us, O Lord; and we most thankfully acknowledge the favour thou hast done us: in delivering us, the posterity of Jacob, out of our sad captivity; and restoring us to the land in which thou thyself hast chosen to dwell, (Ezra i.)

Ver. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people: thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.*] Our sins kept us from it, in banishment, a long time; but now thou hast graciously pardoned both our idolatry, and all the other crimes for which we justly suffered.

Ver. 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.*] Thou hast put an end to the sore punishments which in thy heavy displeasure thou inflictedst on us: and turned thy severity, which, like fire, had almost consumed us, into great clemency and mercy towards us.

Ver. 4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.*] Complete, good Lord, our deliverance, which thou hast thus graciously begun: and let not our ingratitude provoke thee to continue this new vexation and trouble that is befallen us, (Ezra iv. 4, 5. 21. 23.)

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?*] Which forced us to sigh, and say, in the anguish of our souls, Will there never be an end of our miseries? Is it not enough that the foregoing generation hath felt the sad effects of thine anger, but it must extend itself to us also, and our posterity?

Ver. 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?*] Will it not be more for thy honour, not only to preserve this feeble life which thou hast bestowed on us, but to give us a perfect recovery? that thy people may have nothing to damp their joy and entire satisfaction in thy goodness to them.

Ver. 7. *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.*] Make us so happy, good Lord; and, though we deserve, indeed, to be more miserable than we are, yet let thy mercy prevail with thee to grant us a complete deliverance.

Ver. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.*] I will wait patiently upon the Lord, the judge of the world, for a gracious answer to these prayers; hoping that he will not condemn us to farther punishment; but settle his people, who devoutly worship him, in a prosperous tranquillity; provided they return not again to their old idolatry.

Ver. 9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.*] He will be so far from deserting those who fear to offend him; that I am confident the time approaches, when he will finish what he hath begun to do for us, in rebuilding our temple, (Ezra v. 2. 8. vi. 7, 8, &c.) and restoring our country to its ancient dignity and splendour.

Ver. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*] For, methinks, I see goodness and fidelity, justice and concord (which are the principal glory of a kingdom), meeting together, like ancient friends, which have been long absent, and embracing each other.

Ver. 11. *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*] And, as truth and honesty, with all other virtues, shall grow and flourish among us (like flowers and herbs in the spring, after a tedious winter), so God shall faithfully fulfil his promises to us, and exercise a most gracious providence over us.

Ver. 12. *Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.*] Yea, the Lord will do us good beyond our expectation: and reward our fruitfulness in good works, with such a large and plentiful increase of the fruits of the earth, as shall demonstrate the bounty of heaven to us.

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Ver. 13. *Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.*] He will govern us with great justice and mercy; having his faithful promises always before his eyes: from that rule he will never swerve; but steadfastly proceed by it, as the constant method he will hold in his Divine administrations.

PSALM LXXXVI.

A Prayer of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title satisfies us that David was the author of this Psalm; which the collector of this third book found, I suppose, after the other two were made up and published, and so placed it here, among those which belong to the same subject. For though it was composed by David, when he was so persecuted, either by Saul or Absalom, that he was stripped of all he had, and left in a most forlorn condition, (ver. 1.) yet Theodoret thinks it was made with a prospect of the attempt which the Assyrians made upon Jerusalem, and the hope which Hezekiah then placed in God for deliverance. Which notion, it is likely, he had from the Jews; who say, that this prayer was made use of by Hezekiah in the time of that sore distress: for the first words of this Psalm are the same with his in 2 Kings xix. 16. and the eighth and ninth verses may very fitly be accommodated to that history (as I have there observed), but the rest a great deal better to David.

Ver. 1. *BOW down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.*] There cannot be a fitter object of thy mercy, O Lord, than thy poor supplicant, who beseeches thee graciously to condescend to his request; for else he is utterly undone, being quite destitute of all human help.

Ver. 2. *Preserve my soul, for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.*] And yet my life is in imminent danger, unless thou dost preserve it; as many reasons make me hope thou wilt: for, as thou the righteous judge hast been long my benefactor, and I am perfectly innocent of that my enemies charge me withal, so I myself have been a reliever of others in their need; and besides, am a faithful servant of thine, who depends entirely upon thee, and hath no confidence in any thing but only thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3. *Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.*] Whose merciful help I have also implored with most importunate and incessant prayers; which is another reason of my hope, that thou wilt take compassion upon me, O Lord.

Ver. 4. *Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*] And turn the present sorrow of thy servant into joy and gladness: for I have placed my hope entirely in thee, O Lord; and expect nothing but from thee alone.

Ver. 5. *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*] Who art no less bountiful (which is another exceeding great encouragement to me) than I am indigent; ready also to pardon those that have offended thee: yea, to shew abundant kindness to every one of them, in his greatest distress; when, with unfeigned devotion, he calls upon thee.

Ver. 6. *Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.*] As I now do, O Lord, most humbly beseeching thee, with repeated entreaties, to give a favourable answer to these prayers and supplications; whereby I deprecate thy displeasure, and sue unto thee for favour.

Ver. 7. *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.*] Which I beseech thee let me the rather obtain, because my distress is so great and so urgent, that thy power will now be the more magnified in delivering me: as heretofore thou hast been wont to do, upon such earnest petitions as these are unto thee.

Ver. 8. *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.*] For nothing is too hard for thee; nor art thou unwilling to do more kindnesses for us, because thou hast done so many already: but, as appears by thy unparalleled works, dost incomparably excel (whatsoever strangers think, 2 Kings xviii. 15.) all those that are worshipped in the world as gods; who are not able so much as to help and preserve themselves.

Ver. 9. *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*] Which shall move all our neighbouring nations, (2 Chron. xxxii. 23.) as all the rest shall do in the days of that great King which we expect, (Rom. xv. 9.) to acknowledge thee, O Lord, to be their Creator; and with humble veneration to submit themselves unto thee, and to honour thee with their highest praises.

Ver. 10. *For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.*] For they shall clearly see, by the magnificence of thy marvellous works, that thou art infinitely superior to all those powers whom they adore: and that, in truth, there is no God, but thou thyself alone.

Ver. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*] Which I so firmly believe, that I desire nothing more than to be perfectly instructed in all thy will; which I will sincerely observe: knit my heart, O Lord, in such pious affections to thee, that it may never in the least dissent from thee; nor be disturbed with any vain cares, but entirely bent to study this alone—what is pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 12. *I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore.*] Whom I am bound to praise, both as the supreme Lord of all, and as my most bountiful benefactor, with all the powers of my soul: and, accordingly, I do now most thankfully acknowledge thee; and will never cease to honour thee, and to do thee service, as long as I have any being.

Ver. 13. *For great is thy mercy towards me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*] For the benefits thou hast bestowed on me are as inestimable as they are innumerable: I owe my very life to thee, which hath been often snatched out of the extremest dangers; wherein I had inevitably perished, if thou hadst not mercifully delivered me, (1 Sam. xxiii. &c.)

Ver. 14. *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them.*] Behold, O God, a new opportunity to glorify that mercy; for proud and ambitious

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men (2 Sam. xv. 1, 2, &c.) have made an insurrection against me, and raised a most formidable army, (ver. 12, 13.) to take away that life, which thou hast so miraculously preserved: having no regard to thy providence; nor refusing any means whereby they may satisfy their unjust desires.

Ver. 15. *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*] All our comfort is, that thou, not they, dost govern the world: who art no less compassionate, than thou art powerful; readily forgiving offences, of bearing long before thou punishest them; choosing rather to heap thy benefits upon us, and never failing to perform thy faithful promises.

Ver. 16. *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.*] In confidence of which, I humbly beseech thy favour and gracious pardon, though I have highly offended thee: assist thy poor servant, by thy irresistible power, against those mighty forces, which are ready to assault me: O deliver me, who am here humbled in the lowest manner before thee; looking upon myself as more absolutely thine, than any slave that is born in our house can be ours.

Ver. 17. *Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed; because thou Lord hast holpen me, and comforted me.*] Vouchsafe me now in this great distress such manifest tokens of thy favour towards me, that I may not only be delivered, but all may take notice of it: and good men thereby be encouraged to hope in thee; but they that hate me be utterly confounded, to see him whom they intended to destroy, not only preserved, but blessed with comforts proportionable to the sorrow he hath endured.

PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sons of Korah.

ARGUMENT.

It is as uncertain when this *Psalm-Song* (see lxvii.) was composed, as which of the sons of Korah was the author of it. But it is manifest enough, that it was written in commendation of Jerusalem, situate in the holy mountains of Zion (where David built his palace, and afterward settled the ark) and of Moriah, where Solomon built the temple. There are those that think it was composed upon the anniversary of the birth or coronation of some great prince, such as Hezekiah: in whose days this city was made more famous, by the glorious deliverance which God gave it, from the power of the king of Assyria's army. But this is a mere conjecture; and I shall follow the vulgar opinion: according to which, the beginning of this Psalm must be looked upon as very abrupt; but expresses the greater rapture of joyful admiration, wherein the Psalmist was.

Ver. 1. *HIS foundation is in the holy mountains.*] Great is the strength and beauty of this place, which is founded by God in the high mountains; which he hath peculiarly chosen for the seat of his kingdom, and of his priesthood.

Ver. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*] Though the Lord loves all the habitations of his people, yet none are so dear unto him as those within the gates of Jerusalem: a principal part of which is Zion.

Ver. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.*] There is no city in the world, of which such glorious things are foretold, or of which any thing can now be said, comparable to what we can truly boast of thee, that art the city which God himself hath separated for his own habitation.

Ver. 4. *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.*] I do not deny the due praises which belong to other places and countries; but rather am wont to make honourable mention among my acquaintance and familiars, of Egypt and Babylon; and of those who are nearer to us, the Philistines, Tyrians, and Arabians: bidding them observe, that such a notable person was born among them.

Ver. 5. *And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her.*] But what is this to Zion? of whom it shall be said in future times, that (not such a single person, but) this and that man; a great many worthies, and far more eminent, both in learning and in arms, but especially in piety, were born in her; for she hath no meaner instructor than the Most High; who shall settle her in a flourishing estate, by educating and forming her inhabitants to the most excellent qualities.

Ver. 6. *The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.*] So that when he himself, whose eyes nothing can escape, shall look over the register of those nations, and count the famous men they have produced; he shall find only some one great man, and he comparatively of no great value, was born among them.

Ver. 7. *As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.*] But in thee, O city of God, he shall find multitudes of excellent persons, all eminent in their kind, even among those of lower rank, as well as in the higher. And there shall be a constant succession of such, as there is of water in the spring.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm for the Sons of Korah; to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth. Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

ARGUMENT.

Who this Heman was, is uncertain. Not he who was the famous singer in David's time; for he was of the tribe of Levi: (1 Chron. vi. 32. xv. 17.) whereas this was descended from Zerah, who was one of the sons of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 6. where we find, indeed, not only Heman, but Ethan (to whom the next Psalm is ascribed), mentioned as two of Zerah's sons: but we cannot reasonably think that they were, in those early times, the authors of these two Psalms; because Ethan plainly makes mention of David, and the promise which God had passed to him of a perpetual kingdom.

It remains, therefore, that these two here mentioned were of the posterity of those sons of Zerah (and thence called Ezrahites), and had the names of their noble an-

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cestors given them, to perpetuate the memory of those who were so famous for wisdom, (1 Kings iv. 31.)

But in what time they lived cannot be certainly determined. It is probable, when Jeconiah, otherwise called Jehoiachin (or after him Zedekiah) was taken, and carried captive to Babylon, together with abundance of the nobility, and the principal commanders and artisans, (2 Kings xxiv. 14—16.) In some of which ranks I suppose this Heman was; who being cast into a dark prison, (which hath made some fancy Jehoiachin himself to have made it, ver. 6. 8.) or otherwise as miserably treated as if he had been in a dungeon, bewails his private calamity: as Ethan in the next Psalm doth the public.

Why it is called a *Song-Psalm*, see upon the title of Psal. lxvii. It was to be sung by the sons of Korah interchangeably, which is the meaning of *Leannoth*, upon a flute, or pipe, (see Psal. liii.) to the known tune of *Maschil;* (see Psal. xxxii.) Some passages in it may be applied to our Saviour's death and burial in his grave, which the prophet Isaiah compares to a prison; and so is used by our church upon Good-Friday.

Ver. 1. *O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee.*] O mighty Lord, by whose gracious care and good providence I have been hitherto preserved, and on whom all my hopes of safety still depend; I have not failed in this sore affliction to implore thy mercy, with most earnest cries, without any intermission.

Ver. 2. *Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry.*] Let them at last prevail, I beseech thee; and do not reject my petition, accompanied with sad moans and doleful lamentations; but vouchsafe a favourable answer to it.

Ver. 3. *For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*] For my soul is overcharged with great variety of long-continued evils; which have brought me so low, that there is but a step between me and the grave.

Ver. 4. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength.*] All that know my condition look upon me as utterly lost; and I have no reason to think otherwise, being quite spent, and having no power at all to help myself.

Ver. 5. *Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*] I am no longer one of this world, from whose society I am quite separated; there is little difference between me and those, who, being slain in a battle, and cast all together into one common grave, are no farther regarded; or those whose families are so wholly extirpated, that there are none left to preserve their memory.

Ver. 6. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.*] For thou hast thrust me down into a deep and dismal dungeon (which I can compare to nothing but a grave); wherein I lie neglected, and see no hope of being delivered.

Ver. 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.*] My spirit is ready to sink under the weight of thy displeasure, while my calamities fall upon me so fast, and so heavily (like the mountainous waves of the sea), one after another, that it is impossible to express the soreness of my affliction.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.*] I am not allowed to have any familiarity with my friends or acquaintance, no more than if I were in another world; and as for other men, they abominate to come into such a loathsome place; where I am kept so close, that I have no means of getting out.

Ver. 9. *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out mine hands unto thee.*] Nor can I do any thing there but weep, till I am almost blind, by reason of the miseries I endure: only I cease not to look up unto thee, O Lord, continually, who art my only companion in this solitary and helpless condition; imploring thy aid with fervent prayers, and longing expectations; saying,

Ver. 10. *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead rise and praise thee? Selah.*] Make haste, good Lord, to deliver me, if thou intendest any kindness to me; otherwise I shall presently perish; and then, without the greatest miracle, there is no help for me: for can I with any reason expect, that thou shouldest do wonders for me among the dead, when thou wouldest do nothing for me while I was alive? and raise me out of my grave, when thou wouldest not bring me out of prison.

Ver. 11. *Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?*] Now is the time to declare the love thou bearest to me; and to perform the promise thou hast made to them that faithfully serve thee; for if thou dost defer thy relief, I die; and what can I hope for, when I am rotten in my grave?

Ver. 12. *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*] Shall thy power be apparent there where nothing is seen? and wilt thou convince men how good and how just thou art to thy servants, in the place where they are no more remembered?

Ver. 13. *But unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.*] Thus, O Lord, I cry unto thee in the anguish of my soul; which keeps me awake to present my prayers unto thee, before the morning light.

Ver. 14. *Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?*] Though, alas! they have no effect; but I see myself deserted, notwithstanding all my prayers, in these miserable straits; wherein I lie sighing, to think what the reason should be that thou deniest me thy help, and takest no notice of me.

Ver. 15. *I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.*] Which is the more strange, because I faint away under my misery, which hath continued many years, and under the sad prospect I have before me of more dreadful calamities; which so astonish me, that I know not what to do with myself.

Ver. 16. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.*] I only bemoan over again my forlorn estate, which grows still more deplorable; I suffer not merely the effects of thy anger, (ver. 7.) but of thy severest and most terrible displeasure; wherewith I am so overwhelmed and oppressed, that I am scarce able to fetch my breath.

Ver. 17. *They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.*] Which way soever I turn myself, I find that I am environed with them; and

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they increase continually, like floods of water coming from several places, and at last meeting all together, to enclose and swallow me up.

Ver. 18. *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.*] And there is no friend, no neighbour, comes near me to give me the least consolation: but all they whose sweet society was wont to help to mitigate my sorrow, are either dead, or kept from my sight; or hide themselves for fear of being thrust down, together with me, into this doleful place.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

ARGUMENT.

The author of this Psalm was near of kin to him that made the former (see the Argument there); and they lived, I suppose, in the same time. Only Heman bewailed some private affliction, which was befallen himself; whereas Ethan (after a thankful ackuowledgment of the benefits God had bestowed upon them, and especially of his promise made to David by Samuel and Nathan, of settling the kingdom upon him and his posterity for ever) laments most sadly the public calamity; by the subversion of the royal family and government, in the days of Jehoiakim, or of Zedekiah. Whose miserable fate seems, in the conclusion of this Psalm, to be bewailed with the greater passion, because it looked like a breach of God's promise to David; and gave the Babylonians, and other nations, who assisted in their destruction, occasion to say, that notwithstanding all the promises they boasted of, and the fidelity of their God in their performance, there was now a period put to David's family and kingdom.

That is the clearest account I can give of the meaning of the last clause of the last verse but one; where we read that they *reproached the footsteps of his Anointed.* The word we render *footsteps,* signifies properly the *heel of a man's foot:* and from thence is translated to signify the *end* of any thing, as in Psal. cxix. 33. Which notion of it, in my judgment, best suits with all that goes before in this Psalm; concerning the stability of David's kingdom: which their enemies now boasted (as we would express it in our present language), they saw upon its last legs. And the truth is, it was never restored to that family till Christ the son of David came; to whom some passages in this Psalm are applied by the Jews themselves, in both the Bereschiths, and in other books; to which Aben Ezra and R. Solomon consent.

Why this Psalm is called *Maschil,* see Psal. xxxii. But why any should fancy, as some have done, that it was made by Jehoiachin, after he came out of prison, (2 Kings xxv. 27, 28.) I cannot conceive; unless the first words moved them to think that he who, in the foregoing Psalm, speaks of himself as in a dungeon, gives God thanks here for his deliverance.

Ver. 1. *I WILL sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*] The innumerable calamities that are befallen us, shall not blot out the memory of the innumerable benefits which the Lord hath formerly bestowed on us; but I will sing of them without ceasing; and endeavour to make all posterity believe, notwithstanding our present desolation, that thou art faithful and constant to thy word.

Ver. 2. *For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*] For I am confident thy mercy, which is immoveable, and endures for ever, will raise us out of these ruins: thy promises being as firm and steadfast as the heavens; in which we see an image of the unchangeableness of thy nature and of thy will.

Ver. 3. *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.*] Which thou didst declare by thy prophet, saying, (1 Sam. xvi. 13. 2 Sam. iii. 9, 10. v. 2. vii. 15, 16. 28.) I have chosen David my faithful servant to be the governor of my people; and have made a covenant with him, confirmed by an oath

Ver. 4. *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*] That not only he, but his children after him, shall be settled in the throne; which, though it totter sometime, or be thrown down, shall be raised again, and continued throughout all succeeding generations.

Ver. 5. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of thy saints.*] For which stupendous kindness, if we should forget to praise thee, or in this our calamitous condition distrust thy power and fidelity to make it good, the heavenly inhabitants will not fail to do it: but, in their holy assemblies, confess them both with their solemn praises.

Ver. 6. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?*] For there are none of the powers of the air they know (much less any upon earth) that can resist the Lord, and hinder the fulfilling of his will: the mightiest among themselves, they are sensible, are not to be compared with his majesty, to whom they are but ministers.

Ver. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.*] And when they assemble, in the greatest numbers, and make the most glorious court, stand in great fear and dread of him: attending, with awful reverence, what commands he will be pleased to lay upon them.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?*] With whom I will join, O Lord, the commander of all these heavenly hosts, and celebrate thy name on earth, as they do in heaven, saying: Where is he among them all that can equal thee, O most powerful Lord; whose faithfulness is as ready to fulfil thy promises, as the angels are to execute thy commands?

Ver. 9. *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*] The sea itself, which submits to nobody else, is under thy government: who, when it is a calm, makest it swell, as if it would overflow the earth; and reducest it, when it is in its greatest rage, to a perfect stillness again.

Ver. 10. *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain: thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*] There the Egyptians, who had been wounded before with many other grievous plagues, were utterly overthrown: and with the like irresistible power the Canaanites were scattered, at the entrance of thy people into the promised land.

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Ver. 11. *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.*] For thou art the owner of all things both in heaven and earth, and hast the justest right to dispose of them to whom thou pleasest; because the world, and all the inhabitants of it, are thy creatures.

Ver. 12. *The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*] Whether we cast our eyes to the southern or northern parts of the earth, to the west towards Tabor, or eastwards towards Hermon, they all acknowledge thee their Creator; and rejoice in thy bountiful providence, which enriches them with all things needful for them.

Ver. 13. *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*] And thy power, extending itself throughout the whole, always effects in every place whatsoever thou designest; and that with an irresistible force; whether it be to punish evil-doers, or to preserve and exalt them that do well.

Ver. 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*] But none shall be able to say thou dost them any wrong: because thou dost not rule the world merely by thy absolute power; but hast placed thy principal glory in justice and equity, mercy and fidelity; from which thou never swervest.

Ver. 15. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.*] Happy then are the people who live under thy righteous and merciful government; and hear the trumpet sound, which signifies the royal presence of thy majesty among them, and calls them to attend upon thee: (Numb. x. 10.) they shall spend their days most cheerfully, O Lord; being secure of thy favour, which will let them want nothing that is good for them.

Ver. 16. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*] They shall not barely rejoice, but triumph, and that continually, in thy love to them, and thy power to defend them; and, walking in thy holy laws, shall, by thy goodness, be highly exalted, and made superior to all their enemies.

Ver. 17. *For thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.*] For they owe not their conquests to their own valour, or forces, though never so great; but it is thou who givest illustrious victories to the smallest armies: and therefore by thy favour we hope, that our empire, which is now broken, shall be raised again to its former splendour.

Ver. 18. *For the Lord is our defence: and the Holy One of Israel is our King.*] For the Lord is still our protector, though our prince be taken, and made unable to defend us: he whom Israel adores, and acknowledges infinitely to transcend all other beings, is our King and Governor.

Ver. 19. *Then thou spakest in vision to the Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*] Who then didst reveal thy mind, in a vision, to the holy prophet Samuel, (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) when the Philistines defied Israel, and grew terrible to them, (xvii. 10, 11. 24.) saying; I have provided myself a valiant champion (1 Sam. xvi. 18.) to be your deliverer: (2 Sam. iii. 18.) I have designed a person of singular worth, from among the common people, (1 Sam. xvi. 11.) to be promoted to the kingdom.

Ver. 20. *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.*] I have observed David, (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) and find him a man that will faithfully serve me: go, and anoint him with the holy oil; for I intend him for the governor of my people.

Ver. 21. *With whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him.*] With whom I will always be powerfully present, for his assistance, (1 Sam. xvii. 45, &c.) and never desert him, as I did Saul: (xviii. 12. 24. 28.) but my mighty power shall extraordinarily strengthen him in all his enterprises, (1 Sam. xxx. 6. 2 Sam. viii. 6. 14.)

Ver. 22. *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.*] The subtlest of his enemies shall not be able to circumvent him; nor the most malicious, how powerful soever, oppress him.

Ver. 23. *And will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.*] But after all their vain attempts, I will not only protect him from their crafty violence, but subdue all his adversaries under him, and destroy those that hate him. (2 Sam. vii. 9.)

Ver. 24. *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*] He shall ever find me, not only faithful in my promise to him, but kind above his expectation; and, by my powerful assistance, and his confidence in it, his authority shall be highly exalted. (1 Chron. xiv. 17. 2 Sam. vii. 9. viii. 13.)

Ver. 25. *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*] On one hand he shall conquer the Philistines, and those that live upon the coast of the sea; (2 Sam. viii. 1.) and on the other hand the Syrians, as far as Tigris and Euphrates. (2 Sam. viii. 9, &c. x. 16. 19.)

Ver. 26. *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.*] For he shall entirely depend on me in all his distresses, and fly to me for succour, as a child to his parent; saying, with more than usual love and confidence, Thou art my Father, as well as my omnipotent God, from whom alone I expect protection and deliverance.

Ver. 27. *Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*] Which I will never fail to afford him, till I raise him to the prime dignity, among all those whom I call my sons; and set him so high above all other kings in the world, that he shall be a most eminent type of my Son, Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Ver. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.*] Nothing shall alter these kind intentions towards him; but I will always have a love for him, and faithfully perform my covenant with him.

Ver. 29. *His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*] Which is, that his family shall never be extinct; but, notwithstanding the changes which all things are subject unto here below, have the royal power continued in it, as long as the heavens endure. (2 Sam. vii. 16. 28, 29. Luke i. 32, 33.)

Ver. 30. *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments.*] If his successors, indeed, shall depart from the law which I have given you by my servant Moses, and not judge my people righteously;

Ver. 31. *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments.*] If they profanely neglect or corrupt my reli-

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gion, and observe not the rest of the rules of life which I have enjoined them:

Ver. 32. *Then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.*] Then will I execute the threatenings which are in my law (Lev. xxvi.) upon them; and punish their transgressions with sore diseases, and their idolatries with several plagues, (2 Sam. vii. 14.)

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*] But I will not so chastise them, as never more to do good to his family; (2 Sam. vii. 25.) but I will still have a kindness for it, and faithfully keep my promise with it, (1 Kings xi. 34—36. xv. 4. 2 Kings viii. 19, &c.)

Ver. 34. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*] I will not violate the covenant I have made with David, (2 Chron. xxi. 7.) nor retract the promise which I have solemnly passed to his family.

Ver. 35. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.*] For I have unalterably sworn by my own incommunicable excellences, that I will as soon cease to be what I am, as deceive him.

Ver. 36. *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.*] His family (as I said ver. 29.) shall never be quite extinct; but always remain in my favour, and hold the royal dignity as long as the sun shineth.

Ver. 37. *It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*] The moon may as well fall from her orb, as his authority fall to the ground, and rise no more: let that be a witness of my fidelity, when you look upon it; (Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.) and conclude, that after all the changes and eclipses his kingdom may suffer, it shall stand as fast as that and all the rest of the heavenly bodies.

Ver. 38. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.*] But all these promises, alas! so sacredly confirmed and oft repeated, have not secured it from a dismal subversion: for thou hast rejected, with the greatest contempt and indignation, our sovereign; one of the posterity of David, and his lawful successor in the kingdom, (2 Kings xxiv. 20. xxv. 6, 7. Lam. iv. 20.)

Ver. 39. *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground.*] Thou seemest not to regard the covenant made with that thy faithful servant, (which thou promisedst not to break, ver. 34.) and, instead of raising his family higher than all other kings, (ver. 27.) hath suffered it to lose all its authority; which, together with the royal diadem, is vilely trodden under foot.

Ver. 40. *Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.*] Thou hast broken down all the walls of Jerusalem, (2 Kings xxv. 10.) and made all his fortified places a mere desolation.

Ver. 41. *All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.*] So that he hath no defence against those who have a mind to make a prey of him, (2 Kings xxiv. 2.) and is now scorned and derided by those who formerly dreaded him.

Ver. 42. *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.*] Thou hast made his adversaries (whom thou promisedst to depress, ver. 23.) far stronger than himself: they have executed all that they designed, and now triumph in his ruin.

Ver. 43. *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.*] His forces have done him no service; but being shamefully routed, durst never rally again, to make any opposition to their enemies.

Ver. 44. *Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.*] Thou hast put out that splendour which we thought should have been perpetual; (ver. 37, 38.) and hast utterly overturned his kingdom.

Ver. 45. *The days of his youth are shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.*] Thou hast made a speedy end of the reign of Jehoiachin, who in his youth is made a slave: (2 Kings xxiv. 8, &c.) and suffered Zedekiah to be most disgracefully condemned as a rebel, to lose his eyes, and remain a prisoner all the days of his life, (2 Kings xxv. 6, 7.)

Ver. 46. *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself? for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?*] O what a sad condition is this, in which thou seemest wholly to neglect us! but, O Lord, wilt thou never appear for us again, and put a period to our miseries? wilt thou let thy anger burn, till we be utterly consumed?

Ver. 47. *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?*] Our natural weakness pleads for some mercy; and emboldens us to beseech thee, that, since we must not only die unavoidably, but a short time will bring us to our graves, thou wilt be pleased to let us spend that little time in more ease; and not live, as if we were made for nothing else, but only to be miserable and to die.

Ver. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.*] For where is the man whose constitution is so firm, that he shall not yield to death? For what ability have we, though our enemies should not thus destroy us, to defend ourselves from the power of the grave?

Ver. 49. *Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?*] Lord, what a difference is there between our times, and those when thou wast so exceeding good to David! and swarest, most faithfully, to continue to him for ever thy loving-kindness, which we beseech thee now restore unto us.

Ver. 50. *Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people.*] Shew, O Lord, that thou dost not forget the scoffs and jeers, whereby our enemies augment the sufferings of thy servants: there is nothing I lay to heart so much, as all the reproaches of many and mighty nations.

Ver. 51. *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.*] Who are thy enemies as well as ours: and have blasphemed thee, O Lord, and mocked at thee; as if our slavery were the effect of thy inability to protect us; and as if there were an end of the family and kingdom of David, thine anointed, which thou saidst should last for ever.

Ver. 52. *Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and amen.*] But let them laugh on; neither their scoffs, nor our calamity, shall hinder us from praising the Lord, and speaking good of him continually, in assured hope that he will at last deliver us. Let it be so, we beseech thee; let it be so, as we desire and hope; that we may ever praise thee for our happy restoration.

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PART IV.

PSALM XC.

A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins the fourth book of Psalms; in this differing from the rest—that as those of the first book are most of them ascribed to David, and those of the second in great part to the sons of Korah, and those of the third to Asaph; so there are few of these whose author is certainly known: and therefore, I suppose, were all put together, in one and the same collection. The first of them, indeed, being made by Moses, the Hebrews have entertained a conceit (which St. Jerome and St. Hilary also follow), that he was the author also of the ten next immediately ensuing. But, as there is no reason for that (it will appear in due place), so I can see no cause why we should fancy David, or some of the children of Moses in his time, or a singer of that name (as Aben Ezra conjectures), to have composed this present Psalm; when not only the title expressly gives it to that Moses who was *the man of God,* (as their lawgiver is called, Deut. xxxiii. 1.) or that famous prophet by whom God spake to them; but the Chaldee Paraphrase and the very matter of this Psalm, sufficiently shew that it was a meditation of his, when the people offended so highly against God in the wilderness, (especially by murmuring at the relation the spies brought them of the good land, Numb. xiv.) that he shortened their lives to seventy or eighty years at the most, and suffered them not to arrive at the age of their ancestors, or of Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, whose lives he prolonged to a hundred and twenty years.

Which grievous punishment Moses prays God they may lay to heart seriously, and so recover his favour, (ver. 12, &c.) who is the eternal God, as he tells them (in the beginning of the Psalm), and had been, in a particular manner, kind to their progenitors in former generations.

This is the substance of the Psalm: which the collector of this book thought fit to place in the very beginning of it; because of the great antiquity of this Psalm, and the dignity of its author.

Ver. 1. *LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.*] O Lord, who sustainest and governest the whole world, thou hast been the constant protector of our nation for many ages; having afforded all things necessary for the defence and security of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they had no certain dwelling-place, but were strangers in the land whither we are going, and supported us in the land of Egypt; where, in a time of dearth, thou madest an ample provision for us; as thou hast also done hitherto in this barren desert.

Ver. 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*] Where, though we have no towns nor houses, we ought to think ourselves safe; and to trust in thee, who art the same mighty God. Thou ever wast (not only before we and our forefathers were made, but before the mountains arose out of the waters, and thou commandedst the rest of the earth, and this beautiful world, to appear), and ever wilt be, whatever changes there be here, without any alteration.

Ver. 3. *Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*] We have highly offended thee, indeed, and so did our first parents; who became thereby most wretched and miserable creatures, and were doomed by thee to return to the dust, out of which they were formed; as all their posterity must do, whensoever thou summonest them to obey that sentence thou hast passed upon them.

Ver. 4. *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*] And should we have a reprieve for a longer time than our first father Adam, and some of his successors had, who lived near to a thousand years, we should be wretched still: especially when we compared ourselves with thee; in whose account the longest life is as inconsiderable as one day, and that when it is spent and gone; nay, as three or four hours, which pass away in sleep.

Ver. 5. *Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.*] But, alas! in these ages thou carriest men away suddenly; as a violent torrent doth those things it meets withal in its passage: they vanish like a dream when we awake; and are as grass, which in the morning is grown higher and stronger than it was:

Ver. 6. *In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*] But how flourishing and fresh soever it then appear, is cut down before night, and loses all its beauty: such is the frailty of man; who is now in vigorous health, and anon languishes, and falls to the earth.

Ver. 7. *For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.*] This, I am sure, is our condition; who have so provoked thee to anger by our sins, that we perish in an instant, (Numb. xvi. 35. 46.) and are perpetually disturbed with dreadful apprehensions of thy heaviest displeasure, (xvii. 12, 13.)

Ver. 8. *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*] After many threatenings, thou hast proceeded, as a righteous judge, to call us to a severe account for all our foul crimes, though never so secretly committed; and makest it appear, by our punishments, to all the world, (Numb. xiv. 20, &c.) that we are a perverse generation, though we pretend to thy service.

Ver. 9. *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told.*] For we constantly feel some effects or other of thine anger; whereby our lives decline exceeding fast, and many times before we can say what is this, are at an end.

Ver. 10. *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*] We fall short of the days of our forefathers; being now all doomed to perish in the wilderness, and not to exceed, commonly, the age of seventy, or (if men be of a vigorous constitution) at most of eighty years: the best part of which also is spent in toilsome travels, (Numb. xx. 14. xxi. 4. xxxi. 11. Deut. ii. 1. 3, &c.) and

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much sorrow and vexation; to see the strongest among us cut down like grass in a moment, or at least making great haste unto their graves.

Ver. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*] And yet, alas! who is there that seriously considers, and lays to heart, the dreadful effects of thy displeasure, which irresistibly falls upon us? (Numb. xxv. 1—3, &c.) or, with such a pious fear as it ought to excite, takes any care to prevent more terrible punishments than those we have felt already?

Ver. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*] Lord, do thou touch us with a sense of thy judgments; that we may not presume thus foolishly to offend thee, as our fathers have done: but, making a just account of the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, may wisely apply ourselves to make the best use we can of them, in repenting of our sins.

Ver. 13. *Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.*] And then be pleased to turn thy severity into kindness towards us: let it suffice, good Lord, that we have endured so many and long punishments; and now at last revoke or mitigate the sentence thou hast passed upon us, who, though very disobedient, are thy servants.

Ver. 14. *O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*] O let us see some appearance of thy love to us; which may satisfy and cheer our languishing souls, like the morning light after a tedious night: and, instead of sighs and groans, fill us with shouts of joy all the remainder of our days.

Ver. 15. *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*] Compensate our past troubles with future comforts; and make our happiness to equal, if not exceed, the misery we have suffered.

Ver. 16. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.*] Declare to all the world that thou hast not quite forsaken us thy servants: but wilt still work wonders for us, and do more glorious and magnificent things for our children, though we have sinned against thee, (Numb. xx. 17, 18, &c. xxxi. 2. Deut. ii. 25. iii. 24.)

Ver. 17. *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*] Let them inherit, by the special favour of the Lord our God, that lovely and pleasant land, (Gen. xlix. 15. Deut. viii. 7, 8, &c.) which he hath promised to give us: and, for that end, direct and prosper our arms; that what we shall attempt in vain, if we be left to ourselves, may successfully be achieved by thy assistance, (Deut. viii. 17, 18, &c. xxxi. 6—8.) O prosper thou our undertaking, and make our arms victorious.

PSALM XCI.

ARGUMENT.

The author of this Psalm is not known, but the occasion seems to have been some great pestilence; in which the Psalmist commends an humble confidence in God, and ardent love to him, as the best security both in that and in all other dangers. Maimonides thinks (as other of the rabbins also do) that the Psalmist hath a peculiar respect to the incursions of evil spirits, ver. 5, 6. as in the following verses, 7, 8. to those mischiefs which may come from the hand of evil men. And as far as those spirits had any hand in the pestilence here spoken of, his opinion is true; and his words in general are very significant, that the Psalmist here *treats elegantly of that great Providence which protects and keeps us from all evils, both universal and particular*, &c. Thus he discourses in his More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 51. where we have the reason of that name which is given to this Psalm by the Talmudists; who call it *A Song of evil Spirits.* (See Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in the word שֵׁד.)

Now there is no pestilence so likely to have given occasion to this Psalm, as that in the latter end of David's reign; who, having numbered the people, and not made those acknowledgments to God which the law in that case prescribed, (Exod. xii.) had this sad choice given him by the prophet Gad—whether he would be punished for his negligence by famine, or by the sword of his enemies, or by pestilence. And submitting to the last (which God sent a destroying angel to inflict, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16.) was taught, it is not unlikely, by that prophet, called David's *seer*, to recommend himself to the Divine protection, in the words of this Psalm. For that David himself was the author, as some conceive, is not so probable; because there is no such confession of his sin, and deprecation of the Divine displeasure, in this Psalm, as we read he made on this occasion, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 Chron. xxi. unless we will imagine that he made this Psalm after that plague; to direct and excite all others to make God their refuge, as he had done in such-like calamities.

And this is far more probable, than that it should be made by Moses, as some of the Hebrews fancy; for none of the plagues in his time were so great as that in David's: and the most of them fell on those whom God had condemned to die in the wilderness (as he in the foregoing Psalm commemorates), and therefore he could not promise long life to them upon any terms; as the Psalmist here doth to the man that confides in God, (ver. 16.)

The ancient interpreters by *schacal* (which commonly signifies a lion) do so unanimously understand some kind of serpent, and not without reason (as Bochartus hath demonstrated), that I have followed them in my paraphrase of ver. 13. and made no mention of those beasts of prey, but only of venomous creatures.

Ver. 1. *HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*] It is an undoubted truth, that he who always makes the Divine Providence his sanctuary, and, commending himself to the protection of the Most High, rests in that, and troubles himself no farther, need not fear any danger whatsoever: but think himself safe and secure in his custody; who, as he is almighty, so will never fail those that piously confide in him.

Ver. 2. *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*] And therefore I will now encourage my soul to flee unto the Lord for shelter, saying, I have no confidence in any thing but him alone: he is a better defence than the most impregnable fortress; being the sovereign of the world, and so good to me, upon all occasions, that I will never distrust his kindness.

Ver. 3. *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the*

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fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.] I doubt not but he will deliver thee from all unseen dangers; particularly from this most destructive pestilence; whose venom catches men as insensibly and suddenly as the snare doth the bird, when it is laid by a cunning fowler.

Ver. 4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*] He will affectionately defend thee, as a hen doth her young ones under her wings: and therefore trust to his benign providence, and depend upon his faithful word; opposing that to all the dangers which threaten thee, as a soldier doth his shield and buckler to the darts and thrusts of his enemies.

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day.*] Then thou needest not to be afraid, either of murderers and robbers; whose sudden attempts in the night make them more dreadful: nor of insurrections, and popular tumults, and the open assaults of any adversaries.

Ver. 6. *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.*] No, nor of those infectious diseases which arise from unknown causes: nor of those malignant fevers which rage in the hottest season of the year.

Ver. 7. *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*] Whereby, though whole towns and countries be depopulated, a thousand falling on the left hand, and ten thousand on the right hand, of thee, thou shalt remain untouched in that mortality:

Ver. 8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*] And only be a spectator of the Divine vengeance, in punishing wicked offenders so visibly, that thou canst not but observe his righteous judgments, (2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16.)

Ver. 9. *Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.*] Because I have placed my confidence and hope in thee, O Lord, who art a sanctuary to which no violence can approach.

Ver. 10. *There shall no evil befal thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*] Therefore rest still assured, O my soul, that he will suffer no mischief to befal thee, nor let this plague seize upon thy family.

Ver. 11. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*] But give his angels, who are always ready to obey his commands, a strict charge to take care of thee, and to preserve thee whithersoever thou goest.

Ver. 12. *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*] They shall as diligently attend thee, as a nurse doth her child: guiding, supporting, and defending thee, with such a solicitous affection, that the least harm shall not befal thee.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*] No, shouldest thou come among serpents, asps, and dragons, with all the rest of those venomous sorts of creatures, they shall not be able to do thee hurt; but thou shalt victoriously trample upon them and triumph over them, (Luke x. 19. Mark xvi. 18.)

Ver. 14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*] For so hath the Lord declared his will and pleasure to be, when he gave commission to his angels concerning me, saying, Because he heartily loves me, and delights in me, therefore will I deliver him from all present danger, and raise him above the reach of all future: because he hath acknowledged me to be the only safe refuge, and relied on my power for his protection.

Ver. 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*] I will grant him all his petitions; especially when he is in any distress, I will be present with him to afford him suitable comfort: and not only preserve him from perishing, but, after a happy deliverance, make him great and illustrious.

Ver. 16. *With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.*] And more than that, he shall have the satisfaction of enjoying his honour to a great old age: and when his strength fails him, I will not; but still give him evident proofs of my care of him, and kindness towards him.

PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-Day.

ARGUMENT.

If Adam had made this Psalm, presently after he was created, in the evening of the sabbath (which is a rabbinical fancy, mentioned in the Midrasch upon this place), sure it would have been set in this fourth book of Psalms before that of Moses: who may more probably be conceived to have composed it, to raise the hearts of the Israelites to the proper business of the sabbath-day: which was to praise God, when they meditated upon his wonderful works, not only of creation, but of providence in the government of the world. Several instances of which, in rewarding the good, and punishing the wicked, they themselves had seen since they came out of Egypt: and were to see more when they came into the land of Canaan; to keep their sabbath or rest there, after their long travels in the deserts: with respect to which, some think Moses might call this *A Psalm for the Sabbath-Day.* But there is no certainty of these things; or rather it is certain, that neither of these conjectures is true. For as Adam in Paradise had no enemies to rise up against him, nor was troubled with any workers of iniquity, (such as we read of ver. 7. 11.) and there were no psalteries, harps, and instruments of music, then made, which Moses himself tells us were found out by Jubal; so those instruments were not employed in the service of God till the days of David: who may therefore more reasonably be thought to have made this Psalm for the sabbath, than either of the other; after God had given him such *rest round about from all his enemies,* 2 Sam. vii. 1. that he concluded he should be able to subdue those who should hereafter adventure to oppose him: such as those mentioned in the following chapter, viii. 10.

Ver. 1. *IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.*] Now is the proper season to give thanks unto the Lord, for all the benefits we have received from him: and it is no less delightful, than it is profitable, to sing hymns, in the praise

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of the Divine perfections; which infinitely transcend all that can be said, or thought of them.

Ver. 2. *To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*] This is the sweetest employment in the morning; and no entertainment equal to it at night: to commemorate and declare to all, how bountiful thou art; and how faithful in performing thy promises to those who depend on thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*] Which ought to be celebrated with a full concert, not only of our cheerful voices, but of all the instruments of music.

Ver. 4. *For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*] For all are too little, O Lord, to express the joy I have in the acts of thy providence; by whom, as the world was made, so it is still governed: it ravishes my spirit, and makes me shout for joy, to think how excellently thou orderest and disposest all things.

Ver. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.*] Whose administration, though I cannot fully comprehend, yet I admire and applaud the astonishing greatness of thy works; and reverence the unsearchable depth of thy counsels and designs.

Ver. 6. *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*] Of which a stupid man, who looks not beyond his senses, is so wholly ignorant, that seeing himself, and other such-like fools, prosper and thrive, while better men are in trouble and affliction, he presently concludes, thou dost not meddle in our affairs; but leavest all to chance: for he doth not understand so much as this secret:

Ver. 7. *When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.*] That when the lewdest men grow rich, high, and powerful; and their interest is such, that by their means all the workers of iniquity, and few other men, are promoted; the reason is, because nothing in this world is of any great value, nor of any long continuance; but, after they have flourished awhile in an empty glory, they shall be cut down like grass; and, which is more, never rise up again.

Ver. 8. *But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.*] And that thou, who rulest all things, though far out of their sight, canst as well punish or reward men hereafter, as at present; being the eternal Lord.

Ver. 9. *For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.*] Who shewest thou dost not intend to let the wicked escape, though now they flourish; for thou hast begun already to give thy enemies, who have long prospered, a remarkable defeat: they have received such a notable blow, that I am confident they shall perish; and all their partakers, though never so numerous and strongly linked together, be dispersed and utterly destroyed.

Ver. 10. *But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*] But my power and authority thou shalt raise to a formidable height: and crown that dignity with such undisturbed joy and pleasure, as shall prove the pious are not always miserable;

Ver. 11. *Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.*] Nor the wicked always prosperous: for to all other pleasures this shall be added, that I shall see those deprived of all power who have long watched to do me mischief: or certainly hear of the ruin of those malicious men, who set themselves with all their might to destroy me.

Ver. 12. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*] Which may be an encouragement to every good man to hope in God, and not question the justice of his providence, if at present he be afflicted: for as he shall overturn all his enemies at the last, so he will make the righteous flourish (not as the wicked do, like the grass, ver. 7. but) in a durable prosperity, like the fruitful palm and the stately cedar in Lebanon.

Ver. 13. *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*] For they are under the care of the Lord our God, whose house they frequent: and there partake of his Divine blessing, for the growth and increase of their happiness.

Ver. 14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.*] Which shall not decay, as the strength and freshness of those trees will do with age; but the older they grow, the more happy fruits shall their piety produce: and they shall abound in wealth and honour as much as they do in that.

Ver. 15. *To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*] To demonstrate to all the world that the Lord is a most impartial governor, whom I have found my firm and unmoveable friend: and, assure yourselves, is so just and kind, that he will never let wickedness go unpunished, nor virtue be always unrewarded.

PSALM XCIII.

ARGUMENT.

There is no title in the Hebrew to tell us who was the author of this Psalm: nor was there any in Origen's Hexaplus, or in Eusebius, as Theodoret confesses: who found, in the Greek copy which he used, this Psalm called *An Ode of David, in Praise of God:* to which hath been since added, *in the day before the sabbath, when the earth began to be inhabited.* Which Musculus thinks was not rashly done by the Greeks: but suspects they were moved to it; because they knew, perhaps, that the Jews used this Psalm upon that day. As indeed they did: for the words of the Talmud, in the title Kedishim, confirm his suspicions; which are these (as I find them set down by De Dieu, upon the foregoing Psalm): "The Canticles which the Levites sung in the sanctuary were as follow: on the first day of the week the twenty-fourth, on the second the forty-eighth, on the third the eighty-second, on the fourth the ninety-fourth, on the fifth the eighty-first, on the sixth the ninety-third, and on the seventh the ninety-second.

Nor is the matter of this Psalm more distant from the foregoing, than the sixth day is from the seventh; for it seems to me to have been composed when some of those potent enemies began to take heart again, and threaten to disturb David's peace and tranquillity: which, in the foregoing Psalm, he had said he was confident they should never be able to overthrow. Though, in the more sub-

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lime sense, it ought to be applied to the stability of Christ's kingdom: which several of the Jews acknowledge is prophesied of, in this, and in all the Psalms that follow unto the hundredth.

Ver. 1. *THE Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.*] Let the nations boast of the power and splendour of their kings, and trust to their military preparations; this is our glory and our confidence, that the Lord reigneth over us: whose royal ornaments are not gold and precious stones, but majesty itself; and is not armed with sword and spear, but with almighty strength, which is ready to fight for us: who have this comfort also, that he who made the world will support that excellent order wherein we are settled; so that it shall not be in the power of man to disturb what he had established.

Ver. 2. *Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.*] This we know, because thy kingdom, O Lord, is fixed and immoveable: and did not begin now, when we were made thy peculiar people; but was, as thou art, from everlasting.

Ver. 3. *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.*] We will not be afraid, therefore, though multitudes of combined enemies threaten to break in upon us like a flood: though they storm and rage, and insolently vaunt, as if they were sure to overwhelm us:

Ver. 4. *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*] Though they roar terribly, and be as numerous as the waters of the sea; swelling like its boisterous waves, in a furious tempest: the great Lord is above them all, and can instantly depress them as low as he pleases.

Ver. 5. *Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.*] And thy fidelity, in performing the promises wherein thou hast testified thy good will to us, is as unquestionable as thy power: no age shall find it fail: for it becomes not thee to start from thy word delivered to us by thy oracle; but it is thy glory to observe it sacredly for ever.

PSALM XCIV.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm also wants an inscription in the Hebrew, to tell us who was the author of it, but the later Greeks entitle David to it; and call it, *a Psalm of his for the fourth Day of the Week:* which they had (as I shewed in the Argument of the foregoing Psalm) from the Hebrew tradition in the Talmud: and he hath little acquaintance with the history of David, who doth not see that here is an exact description of the court of Saul, who abused their authority to all manner of oppression and violence (especially against David), without any fear of God, or thought that he would call them to any account for it; as he complains in several other Psalms; particularly lvii.—lix.

But it might as well be penned by any other holy man, who lived in times of general corruption; when (as Theodoret expresses it) their kings and their princes (*i. e.* judges) loved not to be tied to the law: but pronounced unjust sentences, and committed murders; selling the blood of innocents for bribes: of whom the prophet Isaiah sadly complains, ver. 21. of the first chapter; where, ver. 10. he calls them *rulers of Sodom.* Certain it is, the Psalmist, whosoever he was, desires he may see justice done upon such atheistical oppressors; and desires good men not to be discouraged under their tyranny: but patiently expect a happy issue of all the vexation which they gave them.

Ver. 1. *O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*] O eternal Lord, the sovereign of the world, in whose power it is to punish the highest offenders; and to whom alone it belongs to take revenge on those who oppress thy people, when they should protect them: make thy justice conspicuous in a severe vengeance upon them.

Ver. 2. *Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.*] Call them to an account, O thou righteous Judge of the whole earth: and, by making them suffer according to the wrong they have done, let those proud men, who have acted as if they thought none could control them, know they have a superior.

Ver. 3. *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?*] We can scarce behold these wicked men without indignation; it tempts us to impatience, O Lord, to see how they prosper and triumph in their injurious proceedings:

Ver. 4. *How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*] And to hear their insolent and provoking language; for they care not what they say; but as they intolerably abuse us, so they audaciously blaspheme thee: the whole company of them priding themselves in the mischief they do; and scornfully deriding those that tell thy judgments will overtake them.

Ver. 5. *They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.*] They have crushed thy people so, that they dare scarce complain of their tyranny: which cruelly afflicts those who are dear unto thee, with all manner of rapines and extortions.

Ver. 6. *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*] They have no compassion upon the widow or the stranger; but rather spoil them; nay, condemn them to die upon false accusations (that they may possess themselves of their estates), because they have no patron to defend them: and in the same manner they murder, for it is no better, the poor fatherless children, whom they ought to protect from violence.

Ver. 7. *Yet they say, The Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*] And to harden themselves in their wickedness, they say; What do you tell us of the Lord? he knows not, or minds not, what we do here. Though there are such evident demonstrations of the Divine Providence over Jacob, and his posterity; yet, for all that, they fancy he doth not regard, nor will call them to any account for their doings.

Ver. 8. *Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?*] What stupid wretches are these! who think themselves the wisest, but are in truth the most brutish of all mankind: whom I would advise, if they have not perfectly lost their reason, to consider this

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(and sure they are not such fools, but they may soon understand it):

Ver. 9. *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?*] Shall not he hear your blasphemies, who gave you the faculty of hearing? and shall not he see all you do, who gave you the power of seeing? Is it possible he should give to others what he wants himself?

Ver. 10. *He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?*] He that taught all nations his will, shall not he correct them when they transgress it? to what purpose did he make man to know the difference between good and evil, but that he should observe it; and expect, if he did not, to suffer for it?

Ver. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*] Let them devise what ways they please, and flatter themselves with hopes to escape his vengeance: the Lord knows them all; and will make them see one day, that all such counsels and contrivances are but mere folly and vanity.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.*] And far better had it been for them to have been punished sooner: for not he that prospers in his wickedness is happy, but he whom thou chastenest, O Lord, when he doeth amiss; and thereby teachest to study and obey thy law with greater care and diligence.

Ver. 13. *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*] Which will quiet his mind under all his troubles, and at last procure the removal of them: when absolute destruction and ruin meantime are preparing for the ungodly.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.*] For the Lord will never abandon the care of his people; nor leave those whom he owns for his peculiar possession, to be utterly undone by the oppressions, which for a time they may endure.

Ver. 15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*] But how much soever his judgments may seem to depart from the rules of righteousness, while the wicked flourish, and the godly are afflicted; they shall at last return to such a perfect conformity with them, that all honest-hearted men shall be encouraged thereby still to follow the Lord; and by no means to depart from their integrity, though all things look as if they were unequally carried.

Ver. 16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?*] Let them learn by my example not to despond; for who is it but he alone, from whom I have expected, and still do expect, to receive protection and help against these malicious men? who make no conscience of what they do, and design my utter ruin.

Ver. 17. *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*] Whose power also is so great, that if the Lord had not seasonably interposed for my assistance and deliverance, I had not now been praying to him, but laid in a silent grave.

Ver. 18. *When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.*] This was my constant support, if at any time my heart even failed me, and I was ready to conclude, I cannot subsist any longer; then thy mercy, O Lord, sent me relief, and preserved me from the danger wherein I was afraid I should have unavoidably perished.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*] I have had innumerable perplexed thoughts, and anxious cares, which have extremely disquieted me: but as soon as ever I reflected on thy goodness, justice, and truth, they all vanished; and I felt such consolation from thence, as revived my dejected soul.

Ver. 20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?*] And made me say, I will never imagine it possible, that thou shouldest favour the tyrannical proceedings of these unrighteous judges: who not only oppress thy people, but do it in a form of justice; and, under the colour and pretext of law, make them miserable.

Ver. 21. *They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*] They assemble themselves together, and in full council combine to destroy the righteous: upon whom they pass a solemn sentence, though he be perfectly guiltless, to lose his life.

Ver. 22. *But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.*] But this doth not discourage me (whose case this is); let them decree what they please, and be too hard for all laws, the Lord, who hates unrighteousness, will be my defence; he, who hath been long very gracious to me, I am confident, will secure me from their violence:

Ver. 23. *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.*] And, more than that, retort it upon themselves; for the mischief they intended against me, shall fall upon their own head: he shall cut them off in their own wicked contrivances; though it be not in our power, yet the Lord our God, who hath undertaken the patronage of those that confide in him, shall cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm likewise is without any title in the Hebrew; but the Greeks call it *A Psalm of David*, because the apostle to the Hebrews cites a passage out of it under his name, iv. 7. Though that, it must be confessed, is no concluding argument of its being composed by him; because it is usual to call the whole five books by the name of the Psalms of David; when it is certain he did not make them all, but only the greater part.

Whoever was the author, it looks as if it were intended to be a προσφώνησις, or solemn invitation of the people (when they were all assembled together on the sabbath, or some public occasion: Grotius, in Heb. iii. 7—13. thinks on the *feast of tabernacles*, for which this Psalm was composed) to praise the Lord their God, and hear instructions out of his law: and is justly employed still by the church, in the entrance of our morning service, for the very same purpose. For it plainly relates to the days of Christ, as the Jews confess, and the apostle proves, Heb. iii. iv. where he demonstrates to them of that nation, that the *rest* here spoken of could not be merely that in the land of Canaan, which their forefathers fell short of, by their disobedience to God in the wilder-

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ness: but another, far better, into which they in *that day* were to be brought by the Messiah, a far greater captain of salvation than Joshua. And therefore it concerned them then, he shews, above all other times, to take care they did not harden their hearts against him, when he came to invite them to a participation of the greatest blessedness; but entertain his holy gospel with a cheerful and joyful obedience to it. Theodoret is of opinion, that it was particularly designed for the times of Josiah, when he made that notable reformation, (which we read of 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.) and called them from the worship of idols to the service of the true God. But it could never be more properly used by that nation, than when the Lord Christ came to call them to repentance.

Ver. 1. *O COME, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.*] O stir up yourselves, all ye that come hither to worship the Lord, and with united affections let us cheerfully sing his praises: let us lift up our voices, and triumphantly laud the Author of all the good we enjoy; and in whom we may safely confide for ever.

Ver. 2. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*] Let us approach into his presence with thankful hearts, to acknowledge the benefits we have received from him: and devoutly proclaim, with triumphant hymns, what a joy it is to us that we may address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 3. *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*] For the Lord is infinitely powerful, and hath a sovereign authority; not only over all the princes on the earth, but all the angels and principalities in heaven.

Ver. 4. *In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also.*] All those treasures are in his possession, which lie in the deepest and most secret parts of the earth, whither none of our monarchs can extend their power: and the loftiest hills, which none but the clouds can touch, are part of his dominion.

Ver. 5. *The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.*] The sea also obeys him alone; who hath an unquestionable title to it, and to all the rest of his wide empire: for he made both it and the dry land, with all the things contained therein.

Ver. 6. *O come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*] O be not backward then to comply with this renewed invitation; but let us all with the lowest protestations devoutly adore his majesty: let it not suffice us to do it once, but again let us, with humble reverence, bow both our bodies and souls, in token of our subjection to him: let us fall on our knees, and submissively acknowledge the duty we owe to the great Lord who gave us our being.

Ver. 7. *For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice.*] Which we, above all people, have reason to do, because he hath a peculiar relation to us, and kindness for us; providing for all our wants most liberally, and continually defending us from all dangers: O that you would therefore, without delay, listen to him, and be obedient to the voice of your Creator, Conservor, and Benefactor, who calls upon you most graciously, (by his own Son, Heb. iii. 6, 7. iv. 7.) saying;

Ver. 8. *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*] Lay to heart what I have done for you, and be not so stupidly insensible as your fathers were; at that place whose name (Meribah and Massah) preserves the memory of their provoking strife with Moses, and temptation of God in the wilderness, (Exod. xvii. 2—7.)

Ver. 9. *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*] When they doubted of my power, and demanded new proofs of my presence among them, (Exod. xvii. 7.) though they had seen my wonderful works in their late deliverance at the Red Sea; and in making the bitter waters sweet; and in sending them bread from heaven, (Exod. xiv.—xvi.)

Ver. 10. *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.*] Nor did they then cease their discontented murmurings and distrust of me; but continued their stubborn infidelity, vexing, nay tiring, my patience for the space of forty years; long before the end of which I concluded that they were a people whose heart would never be steadfastly resolved to adhere unto me; for they did not mind what wonderful things I did for them, nor what I commanded them to do for me.

Ver. 11. *Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.*] Which so highly displeased me, that I sware they should wander all their days, and die at last in the wilderness, (Numb. xiv. 28, &c.) and never enter into that good land, where I intended to give them rest after all their travels, (Deut. xii. 9.)

PSALM XCVI.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm also wants a title in the Hebrew: but the Greeks are justified in the former part of their inscription (which calls it *An Ode of David's*), by 1 Chron. xvi. where we find, that, at the bringing up the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, to the place he had prepared for it on Mount Zion, David delivered this Psalm (together with the hundred and fifth) into the hand of Asaph, to express the joy he had in God's special presence among them: which all their neighbours round about, he foretells, should be made sensible of, as well as themselves.

This Psalm, indeed, is not exactly the very same with that; but there is a difference in some expressions: *ex. gr.* it is called here *a new song*, but not there; which shews it was afterward altered by some Divine person, who accommodated it to other uses. And very probably by Ezra, when they came out of Babylon: which occasioned the Greeks to add, in the latter part of the inscription of this Psalm, these words: *when the house was built after the captivity.* Ezra, that is, made use of it to express their joy at the re-edification of the temple.

But it never had a complete fulfilling, answerable to the height of it, till the Messiah (who was indeed the temple of God) came to dwell among us, to give eternal salvation to us. Several of the Jewish writers acknowledge

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that it belongs to his times: and accordingly we not only may, but ought to have him in our minds, when we say, *Sing unto the Lord a new song* (for his new grace, that is, in sending him to give salvation to all nations), and *the Lord reigneth,* (ver. 10.) and hath all things put under his feet. (See Euseb. in his Demonstrat. Evangelica, lib. i. cap. 4.)

Ver. 1. *O SING unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth.*] O sing praises unto the Lord, for his new and extraordinary benefits which he hath bestowed upon us: let all the earth join together with us to sing his praises.

Ver. 2. *Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.*] We can never praise him enough; and therefore cease not to bless his name, and to spread the fame of his almighty goodness towards us; but publish every day, with joyful hearts, the great deliverances he hath wrought for us.

Ver. 3. *Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*] Tell the nations round about how he hath glorified himself: let none of them be ignorant of the wonderful things he hath done among us.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.*] For all our praises fall infinitely short of the greatness of the Lord; who is worthy of the highest praise of the whole world: and hath shewn both to us (1 Chron. xiii. 10—12. 1 Sam. vi. 29.) and to others (1 Sam. v. 3, 4, &c.) how dreadful he is above all that are called gods.

Ver. 5. *For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens.*] For all the gods of the nations are nothing worth, being able to do neither good nor harm; but the Lord not only made the earth, but the heavens too; which abundantly declare the greatness and splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 6. *Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*] Whose heavenly court infinitely outshines all the state and pomp wherein the greatest earthly monarchs live, (Esther i. 4.) For all the words we have are not able to express the brightness and magnificence, the power and comely order, of so much as his ministers: an image of which we have in his holy place; wherein he manifests himself among us.

Ver. 7. *Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.*] Ascribe, therefore, unto the Lord, O ye people, from whatsoever family ye come; ascribe unto him that incomparable majesty, and supreme dominion and authority, which you give to imaginary gods.

Ver. 8. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.*] And renounce them all; and, acknowledging the Lord alone to be the omnipotent king of all the world, do him honour suitable to the excellency of his majesty; bring him an oblation in token of your subjection to him, and humbly worship him in his temple.

Ver. 9. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth.*] O come and cast down yourselves before the Lord in his sanctuary, where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us: adore his transcendent perfections; and let all the people approach into his presence with a pious trembling and dread to offend their Sovereign.

Ver. 10. *Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.*] Go, ye that are already become proselytes unto him, and publish every where, in all countries, that the Lord [Christ] is the sovereign of the world, who alone can make it happy: for he shall settle those in peace that submit unto his government; and they shall not be so disturbed as they were wont, with wars and tumults: he shall administer equal justice unto all; and neither suffer the good to be unrewarded, nor the evil to escape unpunished.

Ver. 11. *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.*] Let the whole universe therefore be filled with joy at this blessed news; which the angels themselves shall gladly receive: (Luke i. 30. 32.) much more ought all mankind, wheresoever they are dispersed, on the earth, or on the sea, and the islands thereof, exceedingly rejoice; and fill all places with the loud sound of their joyful praises.

Ver. 12. *Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.*] Let the husbandmen, and the shepherds, and all that dwell in the fields, leap for joy: and the woodmen and foresters shout for joy, to see the happy day approaching; when all the idols that are worshipped there shall be thrown down together with their groves.

Ver. 13. *Before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*] Let them welcome that day; and meet the Lord with forward affection, who is coming to them: for he comes to reform the earth, and will govern mankind by righteous and merciful laws; and faithfully keep his word with all those that truly observe them.

PSALM XCVII.

ARGUMENT.

Some of the Hebrews conceive (as I observed upon Psal. xc.) that Moses was the author of this, as well as the rest of these Psalms which want an inscription. And, indeed, he excelled in this faculty of composing hymns, as we learn from Exod. xv. and Deut. xxxii. and might upon some other occasion, as well as the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, make a song of triumph, after some of those great victories which God gave them over their enemies. Which was a thing in use before his time, as it appears by the fragments of ancient songs recorded in his books: particularly that ἐπινίκιον made by some poet among the Amorites, after Sihon had taken Heshbon from the Moabites, to whom it formerly belonged; wherein they triumph over their god Chemosh, as unable to deliver his worshippers, (Numb. xxi. 27, &c.) And if we could be sure this Psalm was made by Moses, I should think it to have been composed after the Israelites had conquered Sihon and his land: over whom they triumphed, as he had done over the former possessors of that country. But the Psalm seems so plainly to have been composed in pursuance of what was said in the foregoing Psalm, that *the Lord reigneth,* and is king,

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not only over Israel, but all the earth, that one cannot but think they had the same author: who shews the truth of that by the illustrious victories which God, as their king, had given them over all those that opposed them. For the eighth verse makes it manifest that this Psalm hath respect to some conquests they had lately made over the heathen: which, I suppose, were no other than those which David won over divers nations; not long after (1 Chron. xviii. 1.) he had brought the ark to Zion, and delivered the foregoing hymn to be sung, to put the Israelites in hope, and their enemies in fear, of the great things which should ensue, upon this special presence of God among them.

Which moved the Greeks to call this *A Psalm of David, after his Land was restored unto him:* that is, after he was made master of all those countries which God anciently designed to be the inheritance of Israel. For that it should relate to the restoring his kingdom to him after Absalom's rebellion, is not probable; because the mention of idolaters and of their gods, ver. 7. seems to determine it to other countries. In the subduing of which, God, it is likely, fought for them by some such tempest as we read of, 2 Sam. v. 20. 24. whereby their enemies' armies were shattered, and so terrified, that they not only fled, but left their images behind them (such was their haste), and gave the Israelites an easy victory over them.

But whatever was the carnal sense, it belongs, in the diviner meaning, to Christ's triumph over the grave, and all the powers of darkness, at his resurrection and ascension to his throne in heaven: as appears by those words which the apostle to the Hebrews alleges out of the seventh verse, and applies to Christ's royal power and authority over angels. Which the Hebrew doctors themselves, as Kimchi confesses, take to be there intended: and may be farther justified from that exposition which we meet withal in Midrasch Tenchuma, of the words of the prophet Isaiah, lii. 13. "Behold, my servant shall prosper: he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." This is the king Messiah, says that gloss, who shall be exalted above Abraham, and extolled above Moses, and *be very high* above the angels of the ministry.

Ver. 1. *THE Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.*] The Lord, it is manifest, is the sovereign of the world: under whose happy government, not only we, and they who are already become subject to him in other places, ought to rejoice; but the most distant countries have the greatest reason to be glad thereof.

Ver. 2. *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*] His majesty is most dreadful; and hath appeared in great terror against those that oppose him: whom, as he will not wrong, so he will certainly punish; for he maintains his authority, and supports his government, by doing exact and equal justice.

Ver. 3. *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.*] Let none therefore resist him, for flames of fire proceed from his presence; which make the battle too hot for his enemies: who can turn no way but they feel them flashing in their faces.

Ver. 4. *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.*] It was his thunder and lightning, the brightness of which the world lately saw; and were so amazed, that shivering pains took hold upon them, as upon a woman in her travail.

Ver. 5. *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*] The hearts of the stoutest kings and captains failed them; and melted like wax before the fire, at this terrible appearance of the Lord: at the appearance of him whose dominion extends over all the earth.

Ver. 6. *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*] For he is the Lord of the heavens: which have declared, by this dreadful tempest (excited by his angelical ministers), his severity against his enemies; and made all the people sensible of the incomparable splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 7. *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.*] Which may well make them all ashamed (and they shall be confounded by him, if they will not renounce their errors) who worship graven images, (though of gold and silver, 2 Sam. v. 21.) and boast themselves in vain gods, who can do nothing for them: let all that are called gods, whether princes on earth, or angels in heaven, bow down to him, as the only Saviour, (Heb. i. 6.) and acknowledge his supreme authority over them all.

Ver. 8. *Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord.*] Jerusalem, the mother-city, hath received the news of thy victories with a joyful heart: after whose example, all the other cities of Judah are exceeding glad, O Lord; because thou hast judged righteously, in destroying our idolatrous enemies, and defending thy faithful servants.

Ver. 9. *For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods.*] Whose hearts are filled with the greater joy, because thou, O Lord, hast manifested thyself hereby, to be the supreme and only potentate: who rulest over all the earth, and art infinitely superior to all that have the name of gods.

Ver. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*] But do not content yourselves merely with this passion of joy: if you truly love the Lord, hate every thing which you know is displeasing to him: so shall you have the Lord of all things for your continual keeper; who preserves the lives of sincerely pious men, and watches over them with such a careful providence, that when they are in the power of the wicked, he will not suffer them to destroy them.

Ver. 11. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*] Be not discouraged, though the world should frown upon you; but rest assured, that God designs you, in due time, more cheerful and happy days: which, if you continue faithful, and serve him with upright hearts, shall as certainly come, as the corn at last springs up after it hath lain all winter in the ground.

Ver. 12. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*] Let all truly good men rely on this, and rejoice in their worst estate; that they serve such a gracious Lord: let them give thanks unto him for his benefits, and gratefully commemorate how

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kind and gracious he hath been unto them; that it may be kept in perpetual remembrance.

PSALM XCVIII.

A Psalm.

ARGUMENT.

There is no title here but only this, *A Psalm;* to which the Greeks add *of David:* who, it is very probable, was the author; or if he was not, it was made by some holy man, in imitation of what David saith in the ninety-sixth (of many of whose expressions this Psalm consists), upon occasion of some remarkable deliverance, which God had newly granted to Israel, as an earnest of future blessings; especially of the coming of that great blessing, the Lord Christ, to give complete salvation to his people.

Ver. 1. *O SING unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him victory.*] O let the new and extraordinary benefits which the Lord hath bestowed upon us, provoke you to sing praises unto him with fresh devotion: for he hath done stupendous things, and, by his almighty goodness alone, and incomparable strength, hath wrought salvation for those who were as unworthy to be helped by him, as they were unable to help themselves.

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*] The Lord hath declared, by the wonders he hath done, how mighty he is to save and deliver: he made the gentile world apparently see, that he is the just rewarder of all those who piously obey him; and will not let the wicked escape unpunished.

Ver. 3. *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*] He hath not forgot his ancient covenant with our forefathers: but so faithfully performed what his mere mercy moved him to promise, (Luke i. 54, 55. 72.) that all mankind have seen what our gracious God hath done, and partake of his Divine benefits.

Ver. 4. *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.*] Let them all therefore shout for joy; let them cry aloud, and with strong and cheerful voices sing hymns of thanks and praise unto the Lord.

Ver. 5. *Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.*] Let nothing be wanting to express your joyful sense of the goodness of the Lord; but let the harp accompany your songs: let the sweet sound of the harp, I say, and the sound of your voices, be mixed together with your psalms.

Ver. 6. *With trumpets, and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.*] And let the trumpet also and cornet proclaim with a louder sound, the exceeding greatness of your joy; while you shout with triumphant acclamations to him, and acknowledge the Lord to be your King.

Ver. 7. *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*] Let the noise of his praises be heard like thunder, throughout all the habitable world: both among those that live on the sea, and those that are upon the land.

Ver. 8. *Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.*] Let high, as well as low, applaud their happiness, and join together with one consent, to express, by all the tokens of joy, the singular pleasure and satisfaction they feel in their hearts.

Ver. 9. *Before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*] Let them meet the Lord with forward affections; who is coming to reform the earth: and will govern mankind by righteous and merciful laws; distributing to every man according to his work.

PSALM XCIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Greeks entitle David to this Psalm: which seems to have been made upon the same occasion, and to the same end, with the three foregoing: only with these two differences; first, that from the consideration of the royal power of the Lord (who had manifested himself by some notable conquests over his enemies, to be the only monarch; whose sovereignty extends over all the world), they should mix fear and trembling, together with that joy and exultation to which in the former Psalm he had excited them: and secondly, that he doth not so plainly, as in those Psalms, prophesy of the kingdom of the Lord Christ.

But there are many passages, as Theodoret observes, which may be applied to the appearing of our Saviour, and the infidelity of the Jews. St. Austin and St. Ambrose apply to him that passage, upon which the Roman church builds the lawfulness of worshipping images, (ver. 5.) where the Vulgar Latin reading *adorate Scabellum Pedum ejus, worship his footstool;* those two fathers think there is no way to reconcile this with that command, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,* but by expounding this of *the flesh* of Christ, which is the *footstool,* they say, which the Psalmist exhorts all men to worship (so far were those holy men from allowing adoration to any thing that is not God, or hath not a personal union with him). And, indeed, Christ was represented by the ark; which was the Divine footstool (here spoken of), but not to be adored, no more than the *hill* on which it stood: concerning which the Psalmist speaks, in the last verse, just as he doth of the ark in this; and therefore we ought to understand both passages alike (the particle in the Hebrew being the very same before *footstool* and before *hill),* and translate them thus, worship *at,* or *before,* or *towards,* his footstool and holy hill: as elsewhere he speaks of worshipping towards his temple, (cxxxviii. 2.) And so Menochius very honestly here expounds this passage in these words; *Worship in his temple, turning your faces towards the ark, on which is the propitiatory, which is his footstool; since he sits on the wings of the cherubims.*

Ver. 1. *THE Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*] Let the people fret and be tumultuous, if they please; it will do them no service: for the Lord is the supreme governor of

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the world, whether they will or no; and they had better, with a pious fear, submit themselves unto him: though the whole earth should be in an uproar, we are safe and secure; for the Lord is attended with innumerable heavenly ministers, who are a guard to his faithful worshippers.

Ver. 2. *The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all people.*] The Lord, whose palace is in Zion, is transcendently great: there is no power on earth able to oppose him; who infinitely surpasses the united strength of all people.

Ver. 3. *Let them praise thy great and terrible name: for it is holy.*] Let them all therefore praise, and reverently acknowledge, thy mighty and dreadful majesty: for that alone is every way most excellent, and hath no equal; and therefore worthy of all veneration.

Ver. 4. *The king's strength also loveth judgment, thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.*] For, though none can resist him, yet he is not a king that uses his power to wrong or oppress his subjects; but to do them right, and give them relief, in which he delights: this is thy character, O Lord, who hast established most equal laws among us; and hitherto governed the seed of Jacob with exact justice and singular mercy.

Ver. 5. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool: for he is holy.*] Do you, therefore, above all other people, extol the Lord our God, both in your thoughts, affections, and words; and, turning your faces towards the ark of his presence, prostrate yourselves before his majesty, in token of your absolute subjection to him: for he is incomparably above all other beings, and the proper object of your adoration.

Ver. 6. *Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.*] Thus did Moses and Aaron, two of his principal and most famous ministers, (Exod. xxxii. 11. Numb. xvi. 45, 46.) and thus did Samuel, one of his greatest prophets, that were wont to intercede for you, (1 Sam. vii. 5. 9. vii. 5. xii. 19.) These holy men fell down before him, to make their humble supplications to him; and he gave them what they desired.

Ver. 7. *He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.*] He spake to them in a familiar manner, telling them his mind out of a pillar of cloud, wherein he appeared to them; (Exod. xxxiii. 9, 10. Numb. xii. 5. xvi. 42. 1 Sam. iii. 10.) and they, like faithful servants of his, conformed themselves to his precepts, by which he testified his will to them; and worshipped him after that manner that he appointed them.

Ver. 8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*] Whereby they obtained great favour with thee, O Lord our God; for when they prayed to thee, thou fulfilledst their petitions: passing by, for their sakes, the sins of those who had highly offended thee; but taking a most severe vengeance on all those who contemned their authority, and were contriving how to depose them, (Numb. xii. 2. 10. xvi. 3. 35. 1 Sam. viii. 7—9, &c.)

Ver. 9. *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the Lord our God is holy.*] Imitate therefore the piety of those admirable men; and raise your thoughts, and affections, and voices, to extol and magnify the Lord our God, as much as you are able; for you can never do it enough: and in token of your absolute subjection to him, go and prostrate yourselves before him, at his house on the holy hill of Zion; for the Lord our God is incomparably above all other beings, and alone worthy of your adoration.

PSALM C.

A Psalm of Praise.

ARGUMENT.

There is no other Psalm hath the like title with this; which is called *A Psalm of Praise;* or rather of *Thanksgiving,* and acknowledgment for Divine blessings, as the word is translated below, (ver. 4.) and in most other places. For which reason, I suppose, it is, that the Hebrews imagine (as the Chaldee Paraphrase, as well as others of their authors, tells us) it was peculiarly appointed to be sung, when their sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered; mentioned Lev. vii. 12, 13. The companies also, or choirs of them, who gave thanks to God, are called by this name, Nehem. xii. 31—38. Which makes it probable, that the Levites sung this song upon that occasion: which the Greeks think was made by David; who invites all the world to join with the Israelites, in the service of Him, who was kind and gracious to them beyond expression. Accordingly we Christians now properly use it, in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Christ: by whom we offer up continually spiritual sacrifices; for redeeming us by the sacrifice he made of himself; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promises, which we may depend upon for ever.

I do not know but the word עשה *made* (ver. 3.) may be used here as it is 1 Sam. xii. 6. for *advancing, raising,* or *preferring them* (as he is there said to have done Moses and Aaron); *making* them to be what they then were, a famous people, in a good land: which seems to agree best with the following words, *and not we ourselves* (and therefore I have not omitted that sense). For to deny that we created ourselves, is altogether needless; but that it is not to be ascribed to our industry or wit, that we are raised to a happy condition, is a proper expression of humility.

Ver. 1. *MAKE a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.*] Let all the people of the earth lift up their voices, in triumphant songs, to the honour of the Lord; who deserves all our praises.

Ver. 2. *Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.*] Make the service of the Lord your delight, nay, greatest pleasure; and when you approach into his tabernacle, shout for joy that you are admitted into his blessed presence, to praise him with your cheerful hymns.

Ver. 3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*] Consider that the Lord, whom you worship, is the creator and governor of the world; who gave us our being, and all the good things we enjoy: his we are, and by his power and goodness, not our own, we are become so great and mighty a nation; whom, out of his own mere good-will alone, he hath made his peculiar people, of whom he takes a tender care.

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Ver. 4. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*] When you enter therefore into the gates of his sanctuary, present him not merely with the sacrifices of beasts, but with the most acceptable sacrifice of hearty thanksgiving; and as you stand in his courts, attending on him, cease not to sing his praises: thank him, I say, for all his benefits, and praise his incomparable perfections.

Ver. 5. *For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*] For as his power is transcendent, so is his goodness; as appears by his never-failing bounty towards us, and his steadfast faithfulness to his word: for the mercy promised to our forefathers he hath exactly fulfilled in our days; and will continue to all succeeding generations.

PSALM CI.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title tells us who made this Psalm; and the matter of it is so plain, that any body may see it is a pious resolution of David to govern first himself, and then his court, and then his kingdom, with so much care, that the good might expect all favour from him, but no wicked man, of any sort, have the least countenance or encouragement.

The only difficulty is to know when he composed it; whether before or after he was settled in his kingdom. The first words of it seem to countenance those who think he was possessed of it; and newly entered upon the government; which he thankfully acknowledges. But the words that follow, (ver. 2.) *O when wilt thou come unto me,* seem to justify their opinion, who think he was now under Saul's persecution: yet, having confidence in God's promises (which he longed to see fulfilled), made this religious vow, of being a good king; and proposed to himself an excellent form and manner of life, when God should be pleased to perform them. To reconcile both these, there is a middle way lies open to every one's view that reads this history. For upon the death of Saul, he was immediately promoted to the kingdom; though not entirely: but resolved then with himself how well he would govern; when God should make him king over all Israel, as he had done over Judah. And so I shall order my Paraphrase, supposing him to reign now in Hebron, (2 Sam. ii. 1—4.) and expecting to reign in Jerusalem, (v. 3—5.) which I presume he here calls *the city of God,* ver. 8. because there he intended to settle the ark, as well as to fix his court; when he should be possessed of it.

That passage, indeed, hath induced some to think, that he composed this Psalm after he had made an attempt to bring the ark thither; but failing in it, (2 Sam. vi. 9, 10.) sighs here for its enjoyment. Which I shall not dispute, because I would not prolong this preface unnecessarily. It is sufficient in my judgment to say, that it doth not seem likely he would defer this resolution so long after he was installed in his kingdom. For it required time to prepare a place for the reception of the ark, suitable to the majesty it represented.

Ver. 1. *I WILL sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*] I will never forget, but celebrate with perpetual praises that mercy which hath raised me from a low condition unto the throne; and that just punishment which I see inflicted upon all my opposers: both which I ascribe, O Lord, to thee alone, and not to my virtue or valour; and therefore to thee will I sing my grateful hymns.

Ver. 2. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*] Nor will I satisfy myself merely with songs of praise; but study, with all diligence, integrity of life, and purity of manners: O when wilt thou perfect what thou hast begun for me, and settle me peaceably in my kingdom? Then I shall be able to live more regularly than now in this state of war and confusion, (2 Sam. iii. 1. 39.) and so I resolve to do; sincerely endeavouring to make myself an absolute pattern of piety and virtue to all my court.

Ver. 3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*] No pretended reasons of state and politic ends shall make me so much as project any thing against the law, to which I will ever tie myself: for I abhor the practices of those who decline that rule, to pursue their own private desires; no such corrupt principles shall be entertained in my mind.

Ver. 4. *A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.*] I will turn him instantly out of my service, who shall dare to suggest to me any crooked counsels: I will have no familiarity with him, much less make him my favourite, who makes no conscience how he compasses his ends.

Ver. 5. *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look, and a proud heart, will not I suffer.*] I will be so far from listening to their private whispers, who, by secret calumnies and detractions, endeavour to supplant their fellow-servants, that I will severely punish and banish them my court: nor will I endure those whose pride makes them overlook all others, as if they were another sort of creatures; or whose unsatiable covetousness and ambition make them study their own advancement more than the public good.

Ver. 6. *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*] I will look out for trusty persons, men fearing God, and of clear integrity; and in what part of the country soever I find them, make them of my privy-council: and no man shall bear any other office in my court but he that lives unblamably.

Ver. 7. *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*] No subtle knave that is made up of shifts and tricks, or that devises cunning cheats to oppress my subjects, shall remain in my service: though he have craftily got into it under a guise of simplicity, yet no false informer, flatterer, or any other sort of liar, shall continue in my favour.

Ver. 8. *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.*] As soon as ever I am settled in my throne, I will use my utmost diligence to reform the whole nation; especially the place of thy peculiar residence, which ought to be an example to the rest of the kingdom; taking care that all offenders be severely punished in the courts of justice: and, if there be no other remedy, cutting off those evil

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members who have got an incurable habit of doing wickedly.

PSALM CII.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his Complaint before the Lord.

ARGUMENT.

A Prayer composed by some pious person, (towards the latter end of the captivity of Babylon, or rather presently after their return from thence to their own country, ver. 13, 14.) who was extremely afflicted, and even overwhelmed, with grief and trouble, to see the temple still lie in its rubbish, and the rebuilding of it hindered by many enemies. This was the cause of those sad complaints and lamentations, wherein he takes the liberty to represent their condition unto the Lord, and thereby give some ease to his oppressed spirit: which began to lift up itself in some comfortable hopes, when he considered both the faithfulness of God to his promises, and the honour it would be to him, when the nations round about should see their wonderful restoration happily completed, and thereby be invited to embrace their religion. Which proved a lively emblem of the coming of the gentiles into the church of Christ: the eternity of whose kingdom is here prophesied of, in the conclusion of the Psalm. Which, as Theodoret well expresses it, may serve for any man's use, who wrestles with any great calamity, and implores the Divine favour for his help and deliverance. It may be applied also to his sad condition, who groans under the burden of his sins, and cries for mercy: being the fifth among those seven which are called *penitential Psalms.*

Ver. 1. *HEAR my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.*] Reject not my humble supplication, O Lord; but graciously admit the earnest request, which, with lamentable cries, I present unto thy majesty.

Ver. 2. *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.*] The distress wherein I am is exceeding great; which will move thee, I hope, to moderate thy anger, and not absolutely refuse my petition: but rather to grant me the more favourable audience, and to send me the speedier relief; when I implore it in the time of the sorest calamity.

Ver. 3. *For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burnt as a hearth.*] For my days are spent as dismally as if I lived and breathed in smoke; and the anguish I suffer is so sharp, that it penetrates to my very bones, and makes them as parched and dry as the fire doth the hearth.

Ver. 4. *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*] My vital spirits are exhausted; and flag like the grass when it is struck with a pestilential blast: for, together with my appetite, I have lost even the thoughts of my necessary food.

Ver. 5. *By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.*] Sadness hath seized on me to such a degree, that I do nothing but groan and sigh: which hath wasted me away to skin and bone.

Ver. 6. *I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.*] I take no delight in the company of my friends; but seek for lonesome places, like a pelican in the wilderness; where I may bemoan myself like the bittern in the desert.

Ver. 7. *I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.*] Grief and sorrow banish sleep from mine eyes; and make me like those solitary birds, which spend the night on the tops of houses, in doleful shrieks and cries.

Ver. 8. *Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.*] This hath exposed me to the scorn of my enemies, who do nothing but upbraid me with my misery: and, not content therewith, are so furiously bent upon my ruin, that they have entered into a combination, and sworn they will destroy me.

Ver. 9. *For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.*] Which hath still more increased my affliction, and made me lie down in the ashes: where, while I mourn and weep, they mingle themselves with my bread, as tears do with my drink.

Ver. 10. *Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.*] Because thy anger still continues in great severity against us; for thou hadst lifted me up in glorious hopes, (Ezra i. 5. ii. 68. iii. 10.) thou hast dashed them all in pieces, (Ezra iv. 4. 24.) and thereby given me the sorer fall.

Ver. 11. *My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.*] And whilst I wait for better times, my life declines apace; like a shadow, which, being come near to its utmost length, is ready to vanish: for I have very little strength remaining; but droop and languish, like the dried grass; which is ripe for the mower's hand.

Ver. 12. *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.*] All my comfort is, that, though I die, thou abidest to all eternity; and canst hereafter remedy all these evils, which thou dost not think fit to redress at present: and wilt, I am confident; for all generations have transmitted down unto us the memorial of thy faithfulness, and the glorious things thou hast done for thy people.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*] It will not be long before thou dost take pity upon the desolations of Zion, and raise her out of her ruins: for the time prefixed for her punishment being expired, (Jer. xxix. 10, 11.) it is the season now, the appointed season, for thy mercy in her restoration.

Ver. 14. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*] For her scattered stones are far more dear to thy pious worshippers, than the goodliest palaces in Babylon: and therefore they cannot look upon her dust and rubbish, without the most sensible grief and commiseration.

Ver. 15. *So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.*] Especially when they consider how thy glory suffers thereby: whereas the nations who now contemn thee, will stand in awe of thee; O Lord, all their kings and princes will reverence thy glorious power, the fame of which now seems to lie buried in her ruins.

Ver. 16. *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.*] When they shall see Zion rebuilt (which the Lord alone can bring about), and his glorious majesty there worshipped with the ancient solemnities:

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Ver. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*] And the prayers of miserable captives, who were stripped of all, prevail with him, not only for their liberty, but for their entire restitution to their former splendour.

Ver. 18. *This shall be written for the generations to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*] This wonderful deliverance shall never be forgotten, but remain upon record to the following generation: who shall transmit the memory of it to their posterity, that they may also look upon themselves as a people created anew to praise the Lord.

Ver. 19. *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth.*] Because, in much mercy, he hath been pleased to preserve a miserable nation from utter destruction: and though he be infinitely exalted above all our thoughts, yet the Lord hath graciously condescended to mind the afflicted condition of this distressed country:

Ver. 20. *To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.*] And to be moved by our groans to deliver us out of a sad captivity: and to revive us when we had reason to look upon ourselves as dead and hopeless.

Ver. 21. *To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem.*] That we might go and recount in his temple the famous things which he hath done; and make the holy city sound with the praises of his power, goodness, and truth; which he hath declared in our restoration.

Ver. 22. *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.*] When all the people shall be gathered together, there to worship the Divine Majesty; and other kingdoms join with us unanimously in his service.

Ver. 23. *He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.*] I had hopes to have lived to see this blessed time, and thought I had been in the way to it; (Ezra iii. 8, &c.) but he hath stopped our vigorous beginnings, (Ezra iv. 4.) and thereby so sorely afflicted me, that I feel I am like to fall short of my expectations.

Ver. 24. *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.*] Though I prayed most earnestly to him, and said, O my God, who hast so graciously begun our deliverance, take me not away before it be completely finished; but let me see thy promise fulfilled, which thou, who diest not (as we do), I am sure, wilt not fail to make good.

Ver. 25. *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.*] For it cannot be too hard for thee to raise Zion out of her ruins; who hast, many ages ago, created this goodly fabric of heaven and earth by thy eternal word, (Heb. i. 10.)

Ver. 26. *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.*] And thou dost neither decay nor alter, in process of time, as thy creatures do; some of which shall perish, but thou shalt eternally subsist; all of them shall grow old, like our garments, with long wearing: even the heavens themselves, which now enwrap the earth, as our clothes do our bodies, shall be folded up, (Heb. i. 12.) and laid aside like a tattered garment, when thou shalt command that alteration.

Ver. 27. *But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*] But thou (and thy word) art still the very same; and shalt always continue so, without any the least variation.

Ver. 28. *The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*] Yet all that I conclude from hence is only this: that though I do not live to see our perfect restoration, yet, according to thy unalterable purpose, the temple and Jerusalem shall be rebuilt; and the children of thy servants, who now are in great distress, be peaceably settled there; yea, their posterity after them remain unmoveable in their favour, and enjoy the tokens of thy Divine presence among them.

PSALM CIII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title tells us this Psalm is one of David's: and the third, fourth, and fifth verses may satisfy us that he composed it after his recovery from a dangerous sickness, to such a vigorous health, as the eagles have when they renew their plumes. To that he alludes ver. 5. as Euthymius and St. Jerome understand it. The latter of which says, upon Isa. xl. that he had often tanght, the eagles do no other way return to youthfulness when they are old, but only *mutatione pennarum, by change of their feathers.* I have expressed this a little more largely than ordinary, in the Paraphrase (as I have done in the rest of the Psalm), to fit it the better to their use now that have escaped the like danger: who should take occasion, when they thank God for such a blessing, to imitate David; in making a thankful commemoration of the rest of his mercies, both to him and to others; both in the present and in past ages. And the more to excite devout souls to this, and that I might make their thankfulness the more affectionate (if they please to make use of this Hymn for that purpose), I have oft repeated the beginning of the Psalm, which I think refers to the whole: and likewise put it into a little different form (of a soul actually praising God), without the least alteration of the sense.

Ver. 1. *BLESS the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*] Blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord of life and health, and all other blessings; blessed be his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness: with my whole heart do I bless him; with my most ardent love, and the devoutest affections of my soul.

Ver. 2. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*] Which shall be every day thus employed, and praise his name with continual pleasure: I will never forget (how shouldest thou prove so ungrateful, O my soul! as not) to acknowledge the inestimable benefits I have received from his bounty; which are more than thought can number.

Ver. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.*] More particularly, I render thee, O Lord, my most hearty thanks, for thy late mercies vouchsafed to me: blessed be thy merciful kindness, that, after a short correction for my faults, thou hast graciously pardoned

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them; and healed all the sores and grievous wounds which they had made.

Ver. 4. *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*] Blessed be God, who hath saved me from death; and not only spared my life, but surrounded it most graciously with I know not how many benefits; which make it exceeding delightful to me. [I owe my friends, lovers, and acquaintance, my careful attendants, my warm and quiet habitation, the plentiful estate thou hast given me, the liberal provision thou makest for me, with all the rest of thy mercies, to the bowels of thy tender compassions towards me.]

Ver. 5. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*] Blessed be thy almighty goodness, that my mouth (which lately disgusted all things, or was restrained from what it desired, or was prescribed that which was disgustful to it) can now relish its food again; and is satisfied with many good things; I can never sufficiently bless thy goodness, who by this means dost restore my strength, and makest my youth and freshness return like the eagle's. [O that I may with fresh delight and joy be still praising thee! and be lifted up to heaven (as they are when they have renewed their plumes), in more vigorous love, and affectionate desires and endeavours; to employ all my renewed strength in thy faithful service.]

Ver. 6. *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*] Nor am I alone obliged to my gracious Lord for his singular favour to me: but, blessed be his name, he relieves all those who suffer wrong; and doth justice upon their oppressors, who are too mighty for them.

Ver. 7. *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*] Moses and the rest of our forefathers are witnesses of this: whom the Lord delivered, in a stupendous manner, out of the house of bondage.

Ver. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*] And by other methods of his providence towards them, and dealing with them, declared how bountiful his blessed nature is, and how ready to forgive: forbearing long when men deserve to be punished; and soon releasing them from their pain, when they heartily repent of their folly.

Ver. 9. *He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever.*] He doth not love, blessed be his name, to be always chastising us for our faults: and when he doth chastise us, he neither loves to prolong our miseries, nor to inflict them proportionable to our deserts.

Ver. 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*] No, blessed be his holy name, there is mercy even in our punishments: our sufferings are never so great as our sins; but we might justly suffer a great deal more than we do for our faults.

Ver. 11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.*] And were we never so obedient, there is not a greater disproportion between the vast circumference of the heavens and this little spot of earth, than there is between his mercies towards us and our small services.

Ver. 12. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*] To those mercies alone it is to be ascribed, that we are not bemoaning ourselves under innumerable miseries: but he hath quite taken away his wrath from us; and, adored be his goodness, perfectly remitted the punishment due to our manifold offences.

Ver. 13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*] O what bowels of mercy are these! no father can be more indulgent and tender-hearted to his returning children, than the Lord, blessed be his name, is to those who so reform by his chastisements, as to fear hereafter to offend him.

Ver. 14. *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*] He easily relents, and takes compassion on them: considering how frail he hath made them; and how soon of themselves they will moulder into the dust, out of which he took them.

Ver. 15. *As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*] For what is man, that the Almighty should contend with him? He looks fresh and fair; but, alas! is as feeble as the grass, and as a flower in the field; whose beauty is far greater than its strength.

Ver. 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*] Many accidents snatch him away, even in his prime: just as the biting wind, to which the field-flowers are exposed, blasts them on a sudden, and they spring up no more in the place that was adorned with them.

Ver. 17. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.*] O how much doth this magnify the wonderful mercy of our God! who designs to be everlastingly kind (blessed be his goodness) to such short-lived creatures as we are: rewarding the faithful services of a few years with eternal life to ourselves; and with many blessings to our posterity in future generations.

Ver. 18. *To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*] There is no doubt of this; which hath been verified in those who have sincerely kept their faith with him; and not only promised, but constantly performed, the obedience they owed him.

Ver. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*] For none can hinder thee, O most mighty Lord, from being as kind as thou pleasest: who art the universal Monarch; the blessed and only Potentate; to whom, not only the greatest men on earth, but the highest powers in heaven, are subject.

Ver. 20. *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*] Let the angels, therefore, who know his greatness, power, and gracious providence, better than I, bless his holy name: let those mighty ones, whose strength surpasses all the powers on earth, and yet never dispute his sacred commands, give praise unto him, with all their might; and with the same cheerfulness wherewith they obey his word.

Ver. 21. *Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.*] Let the whole company of heaven, all the several hosts of those glorious creatures, who have been employed by his Majesty so many ways for our good, and understand how much we are beholden to his love, speak good of his name, and bless his mercy, both to themselves and unto us.

Ver. 22. *Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his*

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dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.] Yea, let every creature, throughout the wide world, proclaim, as well as it is able, the loving-kindness of the Lord: let none of them be silent, but all with one consent bless his holy name: and thou, O my soul, be sure thou never forget to make one; O fail not to bear thy part in this joyful choir, that daily sing his praise.

PSALM CIV.

ARGUMENT.

The foregoing and the following Psalm being certainly composed by David, the Greeks, and from them several other ancient interpreters, have ascribed this also to the same author. For which they had this farther reason, that it begins (as Aben Ezra observes) just as the foregoing Psalm ends: and celebrates the mighty power and goodness of God in the fabric of the world; as the hundred and third doth his benefits to himself, and to the rest of the children of men.

As for the occasion of it, we may look upon it as a probable opinion, that when David thought of building a house for the Divine service, and God sent Nathan to forbid him, (2 Sam. vii. 5.) he fell not long after into the contemplation of the majesty of God; who, having built this great world as his temple, needed none of his erecting; though he would be pleased to accept one for the burning sacrifice before him, as Solomon afterward speaks, (2 Chron. ii. 6.) To strengthen this conjecture of mine, it may be observed, that he begins this Psalm with such an admiration of God's most excellent perfection, as we meet withal in David's prayer: immediately after God had certified him of his love towards him, though he would not let him build him a house: (2 Sam. vii. 22.) *Thou art great, O Lord, for there is none like unto thee.* In the same manner he saith here, *O Lord my God, thou art very great:* as he proceeds to demonstrate from his wonderful works. And first he begins with the heavens, the clouds, and the angels; and then comes down to the earth, the sea, the mountains, valleys, fountains, and other inferior things: which depend so much upon the sun, the moon, and heavenly bodies, that all of them together declare the most admirable wisdom of him by whom they were composed; and should excite all mankind to his perpetual praises. Which that we may do the more affectionately, when we use this Hymn, I have often repeated the beginning of it, as I did in the foregoing.

Ver. 1. *BLESS the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*] Stir up thyself, O my soul, with all thy might, to meditate the praises of the Lord. For the highest of all our thoughts are infinitely below thy greatness, O Lord, my most gracious God: who hast shewn, in thy most admirable works, the surpassing excellence of thy majesty; which we can never worthily celebrate with all our praises.

Ver. 2. *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.*] The light, which dazzles our eyes with its splendour, is the royal robe, wherein thy invisible and incomprehensible brightness appears unto us: and the spacious heavens are the royal pavilion, which thy sovereign power hath extended, like a canopy, for thy majesty, in this great palace of the world.

Ver. 3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*] The floor of whose chambers, which the Lord hath laid in the upper region of the air; O how highly is it advanced above the top of the stateliest piles that are raised by earthly monarchs! whose pompous chariots (whereof they boast) fall infinitely short of those glorious clouds, wherein he makes himself present to us; as their swiftest horses are slow-paced, in comparison with the quick motion, more speedy than the wind, wherewith he visits every part of his dominion.

Ver. 4. *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.*] Into which he sends his angels (and what king is there that hath such noble ministers?) sometimes in vehement winds, and sometimes in lightning and thunder, whereby they execute his royal pleasure.

Ver. 5. *Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*] Who hath settled the massy globe of the earth even in the liquid air, upon such firm foundations, that none of those storms and tempests, which beat upon it from without, nor any commotions from within, can ever stir it out of the place he hath fixed for it.

Ver. 6. *Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.*] It was all covered over at the first with waters, (Gen. i. 2.) which were so deep, that there was no appearance of the highest mountains.

Ver. 7. *At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*] Till thy omnipotent word charged them to retire, (Gen. i. 9.) at which they started back, and suddenly shrunk away; as an affrighted slave doth, when he hears the thunder of his master's threatenings, if his commands be not obeyed.

Ver. 8. *They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.*] Immediately the dry land was seen; part of which (by thy wonderful contrivance, O Lord) rose up in lofty hills, and the rest sunk down in lowly valleys; where thou hast cut channels for the waters to run into the main ocean; the place thou hast appointed for them.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.*] And there, though they restlessly toss and swell, yet they cannot get over the shores, wherein thou hast enclosed them: nor shall they ever recover their former liberty, to overflow the earth again.

Ver. 10. *He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.*] But still, such is the admirable providence of the Lord, they climb, through the hollow places of the earth, up the steepest parts of it; and there break out in springs: which fall down into the valleys, to make brooks and rivers, that run between the hills; which, on either side, send into them fresh supplies to enlarge their streams.

Ver. 11. *They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.*] Which afford, not only to us, but to all the beasts of the earth, such abundant refreshment, when they are dry; that even the dull asses, who live in parched deserts, find them out to quench their thirst.

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Ver. 12. *By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*] The birds of the air also delight to resort thither; where, having wet their throats, they sit and chaunt the various notes among the thick boughs of the trees, which grow upon the banks.

Ver. 13. *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*] As for the hills, which constantly thus enrich the lower grounds, he waters them from the regions above: whence dews distil, and showers of rain come pouring down, by thy marvellous contrivance, O Lord, unto the satisfaction of them, and of all the rest of the earth.

Ver. 14. *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.*] O bless the Lord, my soul, who by this means provideth the beasts with grass and hay, and us with all variety of herbs, and roots, and fruit, and pulse, which he causes to sprout out of the earth, that we may never want what is necessary for our food, or for our physic.

Ver. 15. *And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*] But rather take our pleasure and delight in the rich wines, which he produces to cheer the drooping spirits of miserable men: together with oil to anoint their heads; and bread to recruit their strength, when it is spent with toil and labour.

Ver. 16. *The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*] Blessed be the Lord, who by this means also supplies, with abundant nourishment, the largest trees, which are not planted by the art, nor watered by the care, of man, but by his almighty providence: who makes whole forests of them grow, as the cedars in Libanus do, even upon the most barren and stony mountains.

Ver. 17. *Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.*] In these trees the birds, both small and great, build themselves convenient habitations: and some of them (as the stork, for instance, who seats her nest on the top of lofty pines and fir-trees) with admirable artifice.

Ver. 18. *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies.*] And with no less safety the wild goats deposit their young, in the tops of those craggy mountains; whither they can climb as easily as the birds fly to the tops of trees: and other feeble creatures creep into the rocks, and there lie secure from the violence that stronger beasts would offer to them.

Ver. 19. *He appointeth the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.*] By his most wise contrivance the moon hath her full and her wane; and the sun doth not always shine, but observes a constant time for its going down.

Ver. 20. *Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*] And then darkness covering the face of the earth, and inviting us to rest, gives the wolves and other wild beasts of the forest (such is thy care, O Lord, of all creatures), who were afraid to venture abroad before, security and confidence, to come out of their lurking-places, and seek their food.

Ver. 21. *The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*] Which the ravening young lions then meet withal; falling upon their prey with a horrible noise; whereby they express the eagerness of their hunger; which is not so sharp and devouring, but, by the Divine providence, it finds full satisfaction before the morning.

Ver. 22. *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*] When the sun again appearing, and rousing us out of our sleep, they all return with one consent, and lay themselves down in their several dens.

Ver. 23. *Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening.*] And so man, refreshed by the night's repose, goes forth, without any danger, about his business in the fields: and continues his labours till the night call him to rest again.

Ver. 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*] O eternal Lord! how many and how great are thy works! and with what admirable wisdom hast thou contrived them all! If we look no farther than this earth, what astonishing variety of good things do we behold, wherewith thy bounty hath enriched it!

Ver. 25. *So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.*] And this great and spacious sea also, which seems to embrace the earth in its arms, is no less full of thy wonderful works: for there swim fish without number; some of which astonish us as much with the art thou hast shewn in their small bodies, as others do with the prodigious greatness of their bulk.

Ver. 26. *There go the ships; there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*] There the ships sail as swiftly as the fishes swim; fetching us the riches both of sea and land: and there that great leviathan (in forming whom thou hast shewn thy mighty power) finds room enough to tumble up and down, and sport himself in his absolute dominion over all that the sea contains.

Ver. 27. *These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*] O how liberal is thy goodness, which provides convenient sustenance for such a vast world of creatures! Every one of which, though they know not their benefactor, are duly and seasonably supplied, with the food they seek, by the care thou takest of them.

Ver. 28. *That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*] For they only gather what thou, without any care of theirs, dispensest to them: and thou art not sparing of thy blessings; but hast made a most plentiful provision, which thou scatterest every where for them.

Ver. 29. *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*] If it fail at any time, by the suspense of thy heavenly influences, all things look most ruefully: they grow weak, nay, die; and are dissolved into the elements out of which they were made.

Ver. 30. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth.*] But then thou sendest forth again thy quickening power; whereby new ones are produced, in the room of those that are dead: just as the earth, after a sharp winter hath made it bare, looks fresh and green again at the return of the spring.

Ver. 31. *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.*] Thus the world is still as full as ever it was; and all future ages shall praise, as well

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as we, the same power, and wisdom, and goodness, of the Lord: which appears so gloriously in all his works, that he himself is still pleased, and delighted in the continuance of them; as he was at first in their contrivance, (Gen. i. 31.)

Ver. 32. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*] Else they would all soon vanish, and come to nothing: for at his presence the very earth trembles; and the mountains, as our fathers saw at Mount Sinai, are full of fire and smoke.

Ver. 33. *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being.*] I will never cease therefore to sing the praises of the Lord; who, as he created, so supports and maintains the whole fabric of heaven and earth, and all the creatures contained in them: and I will never forget his particular kindness to me, among the rest; but acknowledge to my very last breath the innumerable benefits I have received from his bounty.

Ver. 34. *My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.*] With such affection will I praise him, that all my thankful meditations and discourses shall be, I hope, no less pleasing to him, than they shall be to myself: who will take the highest satisfaction in thinking and speaking of the goodness of the Lord; from whom I shall still receive more abundant cause to rejoice in him.

Ver. 35. *Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.*] But as for them, whose only pleasure it is to satisfy their brutish lusts, and abuse the many good things they enjoy (either denying, or never acknowledging, him who is the donor of them), they shall utterly perish, and be no longer the care of that Providence to which they are so ungrateful; O my soul, never imitate their impiety, or negligence; but be excited thereby to the greater diligence, in praising thy great Creator and Benefactor. And let all those who have any sense of him, stir up themselves, and join with me in his praises.

PSALM CV.

ARGUMENT.

Though this Psalm hath no title, yet we are assured by what we read in 1 Chron. xvi. 8, &c. that the first part of it, at least, (to the end of ver. 15.) was made by David; and delivered by him to Asaph and his brethren, for the constant service of God in the tabernacle: when, after several victories over the Philistines, (1 Chron. xiv.) he had settled the ark of God in Zion. And it is most probable that he afterward enlarged this Psalm, (for who else would adventure to do it?) that it might be a more complete commemoration of all the mercies of God, towards their nation, from the days of Abraham to their taking possession of the land of Canaan. Into which he shews their glorious Lord conducted them by so many miraculous providences, in several ages (according to his faithful promise made to Abraham, his faithful servant), that it deserved their most hearty acknowledgments: to which he excites them, by ten several expressions, in the five first verses of the Psalm.

To which the Greeks prefix a Hallelujah (for they take the last word of the foregoing Psalm, and set it on the head of this), as a note how much they were obliged to praise the Lord, according to that exhortation; when they remembered in this Psalm the benefits that he had bestowed upon their forefathers: which were sufficient to excite and whet their minds to the imitation of their virtue.

And it may serve to admonish the new people of God (as Theodoret speaks), that is, as Christians, how much we ought to rejoice in God's goodness to us; and how dangerous it is to be ungrateful to him: which provoked him to deprive the Jews of that fatherly care which he had taken of their ancestors.

Ver. 1. *O GIVE thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*] Stir up yourselves, all ye that are here assembled, to make your most grateful acknowledgments unto the great Lord, who is pleased to come and dwell among you: never approach his presence to make your petitions to him, but join his praises together with them; and proclaim to all the people round about, what great things he hath done for you and for your forefathers.

Ver. 2. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*] Sing his praise with a cheerful voice, and with all the instruments of music: and let the subject of your hymns, and of your ordinary discourse, be his many marvellous acts, of which let not one be forgotten.

Ver. 3. *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*] For nothing can be so great an honour to you, as that you are servants of such a mighty Lord; who infinitely transcends all other beings: triumph, therefore, and make your boast of this, as a greater happiness than all worldly goods; let it fill the hearts of all his faithful worshippers with the highest joy and gladness.

Ver. 4. *Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face evermore.*] Let it encourage them to address themselves unto him upon all occasions; and, prostrating themselves before the ark of his presence, (2 Chron. vi. 41.) commend themselves to his powerful protection: let them unweariedly seek his favour, and implore his gracious assistance.

Ver. 5. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.*] Which you may, with the greater confidence, expect, if you call to mind, and thankfully commemorate, the marvellous things he hath done for your deliverance; and his terrible executions, (Exod. iii. 20.) according to his just sentence passed (Exod. vii. 4.) upon your enemies.

Ver. 6. *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*] The benefit of which you still enjoy, O ye who are the posterity of his servant Abraham (whose faith and obedience you ought to imitate); the children of Jacob, whom he chose (rejecting Esau) to inherit the promised blessing.

Ver. 7. *He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.*] He is still the same mighty Lord, and our most gracious God; who continues to execute his judgments every where upon our enemies, (2 Sam. v. 7. 10. 17, &c.) and therefore let us never cease to praise him, and cheerfully serve him, and faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 8. *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.*] For he is never unmindful of his engagements to us; but punc-

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tually performs, in all ages, what he hath promised in his covenant.

Ver. 9. *Which covenant he made with Abraham; and his oath unto Isaac.*] Which he first solemnly made, (Gen. xv. 17, 18.) and then sware (xxii. 16.) unto Abraham: and renewed with his son Isaac; to whom he promised to perform that oath, which he sware unto Abraham, Gen. xxvi. 3.

Ver. 10. *And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*] And again confirmed it to Jacob, both when he went to Haran, (Gen. xxviii. 13, &c.) and, at his return, when he changed his name into Israel; (xxxv. 10, &c.) and, at last, passed it into a law, in that covenant which he made with their posterity, (Exod. xxiii. 22, 23. 31, 32.) never to be altered, if they keep their covenant with him.

Ver. 11. *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*] The sum of which was this; I bestow upon thee, and will bring thee into that good land, the land of Canaan: which, according to this faithful covenant, you now possess; as by lot it was distributed to your several tribes, for their inheritance, (Josh. xiv. 1, 2.)

Ver. 12. *When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.*] This covenant he began to make with your forefathers (and shewed his intention to perform it, by his singular care over them), when their family was very small, (Gen. xii. 1. 5.) and consequently so weak, that they might easily have been destroyed in the land where they were strangers, (xxiii. 4.) and had no friends nor allies to support them:

Ver. 13. *When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people.*] Nor any settled habitation; but were forced to wander to and fro, from one part of Canaan into another, (Gen. xii. 6. 8, 9.) and then to sojourn in other kingdoms; sometimes in Egypt, (ver. 10.) sometimes in Gerar, (xx. 1. xxvi. 1.) and sometimes in the eastern country from whence they came, (xxix. 1.)

Ver. 14. *He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes.*] And wheresoever they sojourned, he took them into his protection, and suffered no man to do them any injury, (Gen. xxxi. 24. 42.) but gave severe checks even to the king of Egypt, (xii. 16.) and the king of Gerar, (xx. 3, &c.) to prevent the mischief which they were designing to them.

Ver. 15. *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*] For he told them, these were sacred persons, whom he designed to make greater men than themselves, and therefore charged them not to hurt them; but to honour them, not merely as princes, (Gen. xxiii. 6.) but as prophets, (xx. 7.) by whose prayers they should receive great blessings if they were kind to them.

Ver. 16. *Moreover, he called for a famine upon the land; he brake the whole staff of bread.*] And when, in the days of Jacob, he punished the land of Canaan, as well as other countries, with such a dearth, (Gen. xli. 54, &c.) that the earth brought forth no kind of grain for the support of human life:

Ver. 17. *He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant*] He took a special care, in a most wonderful way, to provide both for him and for his family; for Joseph (whom his brethren first conspired to destroy, but afterward were diverted from their purpose, and only sold for a slave) was brought into Egypt, by the secret counsel of God, (Gen. xlv. 5. 7, &c.) to be the instrument of their preservation.

Ver. 18. *Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron.*] He was oppressed, indeed, for a long time by a most grievous calumny: which was a sorer affliction to him, than the chains and fetters that were, at first, laid upon him in prison.

Ver. 19. *Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.*] Till mention at last was made of him to Pharaoh, by one of his officers: who related how exactly Joseph predicted what had befallen him and another of his fellow-servants; as if he were a man inspired, (Gen. xl. 21, 22. xli. 12, 13.)

Ver. 20. *The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.*] Whereupon the king presently sent for him; (Gen. xli. 14.) that great prince, whose dominion extended over many provinces, and commanded him to be set at liberty.

Ver. 21. *He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance.*] And received such satisfaction from him about his dream, which none of his wise men could interpret, that he not only wholly discharged him from his imprisonment, but made him the chief officer in the court: and, under himself, the supreme governor of his whole kingdom, (Gen. xli. 40, 41.)

Ver. 22. *To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom.*] Yea, entrusted him with an absolnte power, to command all the rulers of his several provinces, what he pleased; and to punish their disobedience according to his discretion: the most ancient and wisest counsellors in the realm were ordered to repair to him, and to do nothing without his instructions, (Gen. xli. 44.)

Ver. 23. *Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.*] By which great authority he procured not only the leave, but the invitation of Pharaoh (Gen. xlv. 16, 17, &c.) to his father, to come and bring all his family with him into Egypt; and accordingly he came and dwelt in the best part of all the country, (xlvi. 26, 27.)

Ver. 24. *And he increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies.*] Where, according to his promise, when he bade Jacob accept that invitation, (Gen. xlvi. 3, 4.) the Lord multiplied them exceedingly, (Exod. i. 7.) and made them mightier than the Egyptians, (ver. 9.) who, of friends, were now become their enemies.

Ver. 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants.*] For the kinder God was to the Israelites, and the more he increased their numbers, the greater jealousy it begat in the heart of the Egyptians: which turned at last into an absolute hatred of them; and provoked their malice to invent the cruelest ways, first to diminish, (Exod. i. 10, 11, &c.) and then to destroy them, (ver. 15, 16.)

Ver. 26. *He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen.*] This moved the Divine compassion, when he saw their oppression grew intolerable, to give commission to Moses, whom he had in an extraordinary manner preserved from perishing, (Exod. iii. 13.) and to Aaron, whom he chose to be his assistant, (iv. 15.) to go and demand their liberty of Pharaoh, (iv. 23. v. 1.)

Ver. 27. *They shewed his signs among them, and wonders*

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in the land of Ham.] And he disputing their commission (and refusing to let Israel go), they proved it, and persuaded him to obey it, by many miraculous works: which God commanded them to do, as tokens that he had sent them.

Ver. 28. *He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.*] Among which the pitchy darkness, which overspread the whole land three days (except only where the Israelites dwelt), was a very remarkable punishment of Pharaoh's blindness: who would not see the hand of God in all those other plagues, which Moses and Aaron, not fearing his displeasure, but pursuing their orders, had inflicted on him.

Ver. 29. *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.*] As, first of all, the Lord commanded them to stretch their hand upon all the waters of Egypt; which he turned into blood: and made them so putrid, that the fish which was in the river died, (Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

Ver. 30. *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance in the chambers of their kings.*] And, at the next stroke, produced such a vast number of frogs out of the stinking waters and mud, that not only the whole earth was covered with them, but no house, no room in their houses, no, not the cabinets of their king and his princes, were free from their annoyance, (Exod. viii. 3—6.)

Ver. 31. *He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.*] And then followed an infinite swarm of the most pestilent sort of flies, (see Psal. lxxviii. 45.) after a troublesome and filthy plague of lice, which had infested all the country, (Exod. viii. 17. 24.)

Ver. 32. *He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land.*] Which was succeeded (after a murrain upon their cattle, and a fiery ulcer on their own bodies) by a dreadful storm of hail (when fruitful showers of rain were most desirable), together with such lightning, as was never seen: for it ran upon the ground, and burnt up all that was not destroyed by the hail, (Exod. ix. 23, 24, &c.)

Ver. 33. *He smote their vines also and their fig-trees, and brake the trees of their coasts.*] Which not only struck down the grapes and the figs; but shattered the vines and fig-trees themselves; together with many other fruit-trees in the land.

Ver. 34. *He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.*] And whatsoever escaped this tempestuous storm, (for some things were not then grown up, Exod. ix. 31.) was, not long after, devoured by an innumerable army of various sorts of locusts, (Exod. x. 4. 12, &c.)

Ver. 35. *And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.*] Which, by his command, came and covered the whole face of the country, eating up the very leaves of the trees, as well as all the grass and herbs upon the ground, (Exod. x. 15.)

Ver. 36. *He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.*] And, at last, he finished these plagues in the slaughter of all their first-born, both of man and beast: the angel of the Lord killing, in one and the same night, (Exod. xii. 29.) the principal prop of every family: and the best of all their flocks and their herds.

Ver. 37. *He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.*] Which terrible destruction so affrighted them, that they not only let Israel go, but were forward to thrust them out of Egypt, and that loaded with silver and gold: (Exod. xii. 31—35.) and, which is very wonderful among so many thousand persons, (ver. 37.) there was not one, at that time, so feeble, as to be unable to travel.

Ver. 38. *Egypt was glad when they departed; for the fear of them fell upon them.*] And great was the joy at their departure; not only among the Israelites, but among the Egyptians: who thought themselves not safe till the Israelites had their liberty; but were in dread of another plague, which they thought might kill them, as the former had done their children, (Exod. xii. 33.)

Ver. 39. *He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night.*] Nor did the Divine Providence desert our fathers after it had brought them out of Egypt; but, lest they should suffer any prejudice by the exceeding great heats, or mistake their way in a desolate wilderness; he defended them in the day from the scorching rays of the sun by a cloud: which itself gave them light to comfort, and (if need were) to guide them in the night, (Exod. xiii. 21, 22.)

Ver. 40. *The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.*] He provided also a delicate food for that vast multitude; even when they were so ungrateful as to murmur against him: (Exod. xvi. 12, &c.) sending them, in the evening, such flights of quails, and in the morning such showers of corn out of the clouds, as abundantly satisfied every one of them.

Ver. 41. *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.*] And when they murmured again for want of drink, (Exod. xvii. 2—6.) he was so kind as to stop their complaints, by making water to spring out of a rock: from whence it gushed so constantly, and in such abundance, that it made a stream; which followed them in all the parched grounds through which they marched.

Ver. 42. *For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.*] For the Lord was resolved punctually to perform his promise, passed in former ages, (Gen. xv. 18. Exod. ii. 24.) which made him reward the fidelity of his servant Abraham; even upon his incredulous posterity; at that very time which he had prefixed for it, (Gen. xv. 13. Exod. xii. 41.)

Ver. 43. *And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness.*] When, with much mirth and joy, he brought his people out of the Egyptian bondage; and made them shout to see the difference he made between them and the Egyptians; who were drowned in the Red Sea; while they were conducted safe through it on dry land, (Exod. xv. 1. 13. 19.)

Ver. 44. *And gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labour of the people.*] And, in conclusion, he cast out seven nations, to make room for them in the land of Canaan: where their posterity took possession of cities and towns, fields and vineyards; which the labour of others had built and planted for them, (Deut. vi. 10, 11. Josh. xxiv. 13.)

Ver. 45. *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.*] That they might have the more leisure to purge the country of all its ancient superstition and filthiness: and set themselves heartily to worship God, after that manner that he prescribed; in a strict

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observance of all the rest of his holy laws.—For which, and all other his benefits, excite yourselves to praise the Lord.

PSALM CVI.

Hallelujah, i. e. *Praise the Lord.*

ARGUMENT.

There is little doubt to be made, but this is the title of the Psalm, as it is of many other, (cxi. &c.) whereby the author excites them to acknowledge God's bounty to their ungrateful forefathers. For as, in the foregoing Psalm (they are the words of Theodoret), the Divine benefits are commemorated; so in this the Psalmist both commemorates them, and also upbraids the ingratitude of those that received them. Which magnified the mercies of God the more; in being so very kind to those wicked people, that when he punished them, he did not utterly destroy them.

The opinion of that father is, that the Psalm was composed in the person of the more pious sort of people, who bewail the common calamities, and implore the Divine indulgence. And most interpreters that I have met withal, imagine it to have been made in the time of the captivity of Babylon: but the proof of it is very weak. For the last verse but one, upon which they ground that conjecture, may have another construction, and mean no more but this; that God would be pleased, when the nation, or any part of it, should be carried captive, to take pity upon them, and restore them again to their country. Or rather, in my opinion, it refers to those, who, in the days of Saul, or before, were taken prisoners by the Philistines, and other nations: whom David prays God to gather to their own land again, that they might worship him in that place, which he had prepared for the ark of his presence. For it seems plain enough that this was one of the Psalms which he delivered then to Asaph: the first verse and the two last being set down in 1 Chron. xvi. 36, 37. as the beginning and ending of another Psalm (which can be none but this), which he then gave in with the other two there mentioned, (xcvi. and cv.) to praise the Lord withal.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] O make your thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of all the world, who was exceeding gracious to your forefathers, and will continue his kindness, you may hope, unto all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?*] Praise him with all your might; for when you have done your best, you must acknowledge that it is impossible to express your obligations to his omnipotent goodness. For who is able to tell how miraculous that power was, which wrought such wonders for us in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan? where shall we find a man that can set forth, as they deserve, all the praiseworthy acts of the Lord?

Ver. 3. *Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*] Which are so great and many, that they are most happy men, who, by faithful obedience to all his precepts (not only when they have newly received his benefits, but throughout the whole course of their lives), preserve themselves in the favour of so gracious a Lord and Master (which our forefathers foolishly lost, by revolting presently from their merciful Deliverer).

Ver. 4. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.*] Make me, good Lord, one of this happy number; and let me partake of the favour thou still designest for thy people; and find thee ready at hand, in all dangers, to preserve and deliver me, (1 Chron. xviii. 6. 13, 14.)

Ver. 5. *That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.*] That I may live to see thy chosen people Israel settled in a peaceable enjoyment of all thy blessings, (1 Chron. xxii. 18.) and have my share in their joy and felicity, (xxix. 9.) nay, triumph together with them, in the highest praises of thy bounty towards thy own nation, and peculiar inheritance, (ver. 10, &c.)

Ver. 6. *We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*] Our sins, indeed, may hinder these blessings from us; for we are no better than our forefathers, but have offended after their example, by which we ought to have been amended: we are guilty of many iniquities against one another, and much impiety against thee.

Ver. 7. *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.*] We are the wicked offspring of those who were so stupid, as not to be affected with the prodigious works thou didst in Egypt; or presently to forget that long series of miraculous preservations and deliverances by which they were brought from thence: but in the very next strait into which they fell (at the borders of the sea, that remarkable place the Red Sea) distrusted his power, and wished he had left them in that cruel servitude, of which before they so heavily complained, (Exod. xiv.)

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake; that he might make his mighty power to be known.*] And yet (such was his stupendous goodness) he would not let them perish in their ingratitude; but, to preserve the name he had gotten of their mighty Saviour, gave them a new deliverance: that the world might not imagine he wanted power to complete what he had begun to do for them.

Ver. 9. *He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.*] On this consideration, he checked the course of that sea by so strong a wind, that he made a path in the midst of it: and led them through those depths on as hard and dry ground as they trod upon in their march through the parched deserts, (Exod. xiv. 21, 22.)

Ver. 10. *And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*] By which means he saved them from Pharaoh's army; which pressed hard upon their backs, as the sea was before their face. (Exod. xiv. 9, 10.) He rescued them from the power of those implacable enemies, whose hatred carried them to pursue them eagerly even into the sea, (ver. 23.)

Ver. 11. *And the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left.*] Where they were drowned every man of them; the sea, which had stood fixed as a wall to save

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the Israelites, returning back with a mighty violence to overwhelm their adversaries.

Ver. 12. *Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*] Which was so evident a token of his power and goodness, that they were persuaded by it, at that present, to believe God's promises, (Exod. xiv. 31.) and to sing a song of praise to him for this miraculous deliverance, (Exod. xv. 1, &c.)

Ver. 13. *They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel.*] But within three days they grew impatient again, (Exod. xv. 22. 24.) and, forgetting the great and many pledges they had received of his Divine power, quarrelled with his servants; and would not expect till he shewed what way he intended to relieve them.

Ver. 14. *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.*] But not long after this murmured again; (Exod. xvi.) and though, instead of punishing them for it, he satisfied them with bread from heaven, and gave them several other demonstrations of his Divine presence among them in the wilderness: (Exod. xvi. xx. xxiv. &c.) yet, to please their wanton appetite, they mutinied another time, and cried out vehemently for flesh to eat, (Numb. xi. 4, 5, &c.) and desired new proofs of his power to supply them.

Ver. 15. *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.*] Which he was pleased to grant in such abundance, that they surfeited of the quails which he sent them: and, instead of being nourished, fell into a grievous disease, whereby great numbers of them were wasted and consumed, (Numb. xi. 31, 32, &c.)

Ver. 16. *They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.*] And they that escaped were not cured of their rebellious humour, but seditiously disputed the authority of Moses: and accused both him and Aaron, whom the Lord had consecrated for the service of his altar, as ambitious men that took too much upon them, (Numb. xvi. 3.)

Ver. 17. *The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.*] Which moved the Divine justice to punish their presumption with a most terrible vengeance: for the earth opened and buried alive both Dathan and Abiram, and the faction that adhered to them, (Numb. xvi. 32, 33.)

Ver. 18. *And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burnt up the wicked.*] And the other company raised by Korah were smitten with lightning from heaven; which burnt up those impious men, who were so bold as to invade the office of the priests of the Lord, (Numb. xvi. 35.)

Ver. 19. *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.*] Whose anger they began very early to incense; for even at that very place where the Lord had newly appeared to them, in astonishing thunder, and lightning, and clouds, (Exod. xx. 18.) and had spoken to them with an audible voice, and at the second word he spake had charged them not to make any graven image, (Exod. xx. 4.) and had called Moses up into the mount to receive the rest of his laws (which he had begun in a most dreadful manner to deliver to them), they stupidly made a golden calf, and prostrated themselves before the work of their own hands.

Ver. 20. *Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.*] Slighting that glorious presence of the majesty of God, (Exod. xxiv. 16, 17.) which, appearing in the cloud, had done many wonders for them: and choosing rather to commend themselves to the protection of an image, in which they saw no glory; the image of a dull ox, a creature without reason, a servant of man, that is supported itself by so weak a thing as hay, (Exod. xxxii. 14.)

Ver. 21. *They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt.*] The root of which sottish apostacy was, that they did not keep in mind what deliverances God had granted them under the conduct of Moses; whom now they despised: (Exod. xxxii. 1.) but forgat his great works in the land of Egypt, where they never saw any similitude of him.

Ver. 22. *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea.*] Miraculous works, which filled the whole country with wonder and astonishment; and concluded at last in the fearful overthrow of Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, through which they passed safely.

Ver. 23. *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*] Which provoked the Divine displeasure so highly, that he resolved to destroy them; (Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.) and had done it, if Moses, for whom he had a great respect, had not, by his earnest intercession, made up this breach; and reconciled him so far to them, that he did not proceed then to take such vengeance on them, (ver. 11, 12. 14, 15.)

Ver. 24. *Yea, they despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word.*] But when after this they despised (Numb. xiii. 32.) that goodly country, to the borders of which he had brought them, (Deut. i. 19, 20.) which the spies themselves confessed was rich and desirable: (Numb. xiii. 27. xiv. 32.) and would not believe that God intended, or was able, to perform his promise to them: (Numb. xiii. 37.)

Ver. 25. *But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.*] But murmured against Moses and Aaron in their tents, as if they had deluded them, (Numb. xiv. 1, 2, &c.) refusing to march, when the Lord commanded them to go up, and take possession of it: (Deut. i. 21. 26. 32.)

Ver. 26. *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.*] Then he solemnly sware, that not one of that wicked generation, who had so often rebelled against him, should ever come there, but all perish in the wilderness, (Numb. xiv. 21, 22. 35. Deut. i. 34.)

Ver. 27. *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*] And some of them be overthrown by the heathen, whom the Lord would have delivered up into their hand, (Numb. xiv. 45.) and others dispersed in several parts of that country which they despised, (xxi. 1.)

Ver. 28. *They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.*] Nor did they grow much better by these dreadful threatenings and executions; but not only most shamefully committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, but embraced their religion: devoting themselves to the vile service of Baal, whose temple stood upon Mount Peor; and partaking with them in the sacrifices which they offered to dead men, (Numb. xxv. 1—3.)

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Ver. 29. *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them.*] Which abominable wickedness incensed the Divine displeasure to such a degree, that he commanded the offenders to be killed and hanged up in the face of the sun: and also sent a grievous plague among the people, (Numb. xxv. 4, 5. 9.)

Ver. 30. *Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.*] Which raged in the camp, till Phinehas, in a holy zeal, went as boldly to punish, as others did to commit their crimes: and thrust through the body one of the princes of the people, whom the judges feared to meddle withal; and then the plague ceased, (Numb. xxv. 5—8.)

Ver. 31. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.*] Which seasonable piece of justice the Lord not only approved as a praiseworthy act, but rewarded also with the promise of the priesthood: which he entailed upon his posterity, throughout all generations, (Numb. xxv. 12, 13.)

Ver. 32. *They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes.*] And, before this, they had been so unbelieving and rebellious, as, having had long experience of God's power and goodness in providing for them, to murmur for want of water; at that place, which took its name from their quarrel with Moses, (Numb. xx. 3. 13.) who sadly suffered upon their account, (Numb. xx. 12.)

Ver. 33. *Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*] For, being exasperated by their frequent mutinies, he let fall some passionate words; which expressed such distrust and impatience, as did not become so great a minister of God, (Numb. xx. 12.) who thereupon resolved he should not have the honour to accomplish his promise, of bringing them to their rest, (Numb. xxvii. 24. Dent. i. 37.)

Ver. 34. *They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them.*] In which, being settled, they did not destroy those seven nations, (Judg. i. 21. 27. 29, &c.) whose abominations were so foul, that the Lord gave them a strict charge not to suffer them to live there any longer, (Exod. xxiii. 30. 33. Deut. vii. 2.)

Ver. 35. *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*] But, quite contrary, they not only let them live, but, against God's express commandment, (Josh. xxiii. 7. 12.) entered into familiarity, and made a covenant and league with them, (Judg. ii. 1, 2.) and so at last learned to do as they did, and imitated their evil manners.

Ver. 36. *And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them.*] For they forsook the Lord, who had brought them thither, and worshipped the gods of those people whom they had conquered, (Judg. ii. 11, 12. iii. 5, 6.) which proved their utter ruin and destruction, (Deut. vii. 16. 26. Judg. ii. 3.)

Ver. 37. *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.*] For they were so besotted with their idolatry, as to imitate their most barbarous rites: sacrificing to infernal spirits, not only their beasts, but (as the custom of that country was, Deut. xii. 30, 31.) their sons and their daughters.

Ver. 38. *And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*] Whom they did not merely consecrate to the service of devils; but offered their blood, the blood of innocent babes, even of their own sons and daughters (as I said), upon the altars of the idols of Canaan: profaning thereby the holy land with the most impious and unnatural murders.

Ver. 39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.*] Besides other abominable works wherewith they defiled themselves; such as whoredom, and all manner of beastly lusts: which were the filthy vices of those nations whom God cast out before them, (Lev. xviii. 24, 25. 27, 28, &c.)

Ver. 40. *Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.*] And so contrary to nature, as well as his law, that the Lord was exceeding angry with them, (Judg. ii. 14. 20.) and the more, because he had made them his people: whom he now abominated as impure and unclean, though once they had been very dear unto him.

Ver. 41. *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.*] And thereupon delivered them up to the power of those impious nations, with whom they contracted friendship, when they should have destroyed them, (Judg. iii. 3. 5. iv. 2. xiii. 1.) who, retaining still their ancient hatred, exercised a rigorous tyranny over them, (iv. 3.)

Ver. 42. *Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.*] And so did many other of their neighbouring enemies, the Mesopotamians and Moabites, (Judg. iii. 8. 12.) the Midianites and Amalekites, (vi. 2, 3, &c.) and such-like, (x. 7, 8.) who not only grievously afflicted them, but deservedly made those their subjects, nay, slaves, who would not serve their gracious God.

Ver. 43. *Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.*] Who still continued so kind to them, that upon the first sign of their repentance, he constantly raised up the spirit of some great man or other to rescue them from every one of these oppressors: though they as constantly provoked him again, by relapsing to their former idolatry, which in the issue brought them exceeding low, (Judg. x. 8, 9.)

Ver. 44. *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.*] And yet, such was his tender compassion towards them, he did not absolutely refuse to help even these base revolters, (Judg. x. 14—16.) when, in their distress, they made a lamentable moan, and promised amendment.

Ver. 45. *And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*] For he was not unmindful of the covenant he had made with their forefathers, (Lev. xxvi. 42. 44, 45. Deut. xxx. 1—3.) but let them reap the benefit of it, in ceasing to punish them; and, when they deserved to be utterly destroyed, bestowing many and exceeding great blessings on them.

Ver. 46. *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*] For he inclined the hearts, even of those who had subdued, and implacably hated them, unto some compassion towards them: so that they did not endeavour their total extirpation, (Judg. xiii. 1. xiv. 2. xv. 9, &c.)

Ver. 47. *Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and*

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to triumph in thy praise.] And therefore we humbly hope still in the same great mercies; and beseech thee, O most mighty Lord, who hast been wont to do our nation good, to deliver us, how unworthy soever, from all our present enemies; and to restore such of us as are fallen into their hands unto their own country, that they may join with us in giving thanks to thy incomparable goodness, and setting forth thy praises with the greatest joy and triumph, saying,

Ver. 48. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.*] Let the great Lord of all the world, who hath been so gracious unto Israel, as to choose them for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised: let all generations bless him, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity: and let all his people concur in these desires, and wish it may be so; let them all praise the Lord, and desire he may be ever praised.

PART V.

PSALM CVII.

ARGUMENT.

The fifth book of Psalms (which consists most of praises and thanksgivings) begins here; with an exhortation to those whom God (according to the prayer foregoing, cvi. 47.) had delivered from pagan servitude, to acknowledge that singular benefit with their hearty thanksgivings; and thence to take occasion to magnify his merciful providence over all other men, not only of that, but of all nations, where they addressed themselves unto him in their distresses. For instance, travellers in the desert, who have lost their way, prisoners, sick people, mariners, husbandmen, even whole countries, the Psalmist shews, are made strangely prosperous, if they have a regard to God; and, on the other side, fall into great misery, if they neglect him. It had been endless to enumerate all other cases; but by these any man may understand, if he please (as he observes in the conclusion), how good the Lord is, and ready to help those who fly unto him for succour, whatever their condition be.

The author of the Psalm is unknown; but if I have guessed aright, at the connexion of this with the foregoing Psalm, it is most probable it was composed by David: who having, in the hundred and fifth, put them in mind (as Theodoret observes) of the promises made to the patriarchs, and of the blessings bestowed on their posterity; and, in the hundred and sixth, of their horrid ingratitude for such benefits, and the punishments, for that cause, inflicted upon them: declares in this Psalm the inexplicable kindness of God, in their freedom from slavery; and in his careful providence, as I said, over all mankind: which might give them the greater encouragement to hope in him, if they served him faithfully, who had taken them for his peculiar people.

Ver. 1. O *GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*] O make your grateful acknowledgments to the great Lord of the world; of whose goodness you and your forefathers have had such a long experience, that you may conclude his loving-kindness will extend itself to all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2. *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.*] Let them especially call upon one another to give thanks unto his goodness, whom the Lord hath graciously redeemed from a sad captivity; into which they were reduced by their prevailing enemies:

Ver. 3. *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*] And hath brought them back to their own country again; from all the lands, on every side, into which they were dispersed.

Ver. 4. *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.*] And they also, who, travelling through vast wildernesses and sandy deserts, lost their way, and could find no tract to lead them to a city inhabited:

Ver. 5. *Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.*] But, in this perplexity, wandered up and down so long, that all their provision spent, and they were ready to die with hunger and thirst:

Ver. 6. *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.*] Yet then, recommending themselves to the Lord, and earnestly imploring his help in this miserable strait, he mercifully delivered them out of it, and freed them from all their anxieties:

Ver. 7. *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*] Directing them, when they were in a maze, into the right path again; which brought them to a place inhabited, where they found relief for their necessities.

Ver. 8. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* Oh that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for this singular kindness; but every where proclaim his wonderful works!

Ver. 9. *For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*] Who thus seasonably preserved them from starving, by providing, in this languishing condition, drink to quench their thirst, and plenty of good things to satisfy their hungry appetite.

Ver. 10. *Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.*] They also who have no other dwelling but a dark prison, nay, a horrible dungeon; where, to add to their affliction, they are loaded with iron manacles or fetters;

Ver. 11. *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High.*] As a just punishment for the crimes they had rebelliously committed against the express commands of God, and the plain dictates and frequent checks of their own consciences; which were the voice of the Most High, giving them wholesome counsel, though they contemned and despised it:

Ver. 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour: they fell down, and there was none to help.*] And thereby provoked him to throw them into that miserable condition, to humble their proud hearts by the hardship of a tedious and painful imprisonment; in which they lay so

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dejected and helpless, that they saw no human means whereby they should be delivered.

Ver. 13. *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*] Yet, they then making their addresses to the Lord, and earnestly beseeching him to take pity upon their wretched estate, he was pleased mercifully to hear their prayers, and free them from those miserable straits:

Ver. 14. *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.*] Bringing them out of their sad confinement in that dismal dungeon, and setting their hands and feet at liberty, from the chains wherewith they were bound.

Ver. 15. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*] Oh that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for his singular kindness; but every where proclaim his wonderful works!

Ver. 16. *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*] Who, when their case was desperate, removed the greatest obstacles; and made even brazen gates, and iron bars, give way to their escape.

Ver. 17. *Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*] In like manner we see others, who, forgetting God, and sottishly giving themselves up to all kind of debauchery, in an irregular way of living, falling into grievous diseases:

Ver. 18. *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.*] Which not only quite take away their appetite, but make them nauseate all manner of food, which they formerly abused; and thereby lay them so low, that they are at the very brink of the grave:

Ver. 19. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses.*] Yet even these men, when they make their addresses unto the Lord, and, in the weak estate into which they have brought themselves, pray earnestly to him, are wont to find relief from him, when no medicines whatsoever will avail them.

Ver. 20. *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.*] He orders their recovery, when all the prescriptions of physicians prove ineffectual: nay, when they are left for dead, raises them up to life and health again.

Ver. 21. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*] Oh that these men would be so grateful to the Lord, as never to forget his singular kindness to them; but every where proclaim such wonderful works as these!

Ver. 22. *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*] And not content themselves with the sacrifice of beasts (which in their sickness they were apt to vow unto him), but offer those far more acceptable sacrifices of a grateful heart: acknowledging his goodness, and telling every body they meet withal, in such a manner as may express how much they are affected with it, what great things the Lord hath done for them.

Ver. 23. *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters.*] Who shews no less kindness to those that have occasion to be much upon the sea; to fish, or to traffic upon the main ocean.

Ver. 24. *These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.*] Where they behold remarkable acts of Divine Providence, in the wonderful alterations which he makes in that vast collection of waters.

Ver. 25. *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.*] For when they are smooth and still, a sudden tempest arises by his command: which puts them into such a rage, that they are turned into swelling waves and billows.

Ver. 26. *They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.*] On which the ships are sometimes mounted up as high as if they would touch the clouds; and then sink down as low as if they would be buried in the bottom of the sea; to the great astonishment of the passengers, who are ready to die with fear.

Ver. 27. *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.*] For they are so tossed and whirled about, that, as they are not able to stand upon the decks, so the most skilful mariners do not know which way to steer, or what course to take, to save themselves from perishing.

Ver. 28. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.*] And yet, when, in the midst of this great strait, they make their addresses to the Lord, with earnest prayers for his protection, he is graciously pleased to hear their cry, and to free them from that anguish of mind which sorely oppresses them.

Ver. 29. *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.*] For he silences the blustering wind, and makes so great a calm, that the swelling waves lie quiet and still.

Ver. 30. *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*] Which happy change turns their fear into joy; when they see not only the storm appeased, but gentle gales arising to carry them directly to the port for which they are bound.

Ver. 31. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*] Oh that they who are thus unexpectedly preserved, would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for this singular kindness, but every where proclaim what wonders he hath done for them!

Ver. 32. *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*] Let them magnify his power and goodness in the greatest assemblies of the people, especially in his temple: let them praise him in the supreme court of the kingdom; that the judges and governors may be excited to make him their trust and confidence.

Ver. 33. *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground.*] Who turns well-watered countries into a mere wilderness, and makes moist and fertile soils become dry and barren ground:

Ver. 34. *A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*] Where none of those fruits will grow, which before it plentifully yielded; because of the ill disposition of the inhabitants, who produce nothing but all manner of vice and wickedness.

Ver. 35. *He turneth the wilderness into a standing-water, and dry ground into water-springs.*] And, on the other side, he turns a barren desert (for none of these things come by

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chance) into rich and fruitful pastures: and sends such plenty of water into dry and sandy grounds,

Ver. 36. *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation.*] That there they, who lived wretchedly before, find a comfortable habitation: and are invited to build towns and cities in those formerly desolate places.

Ver. 37. *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.*] Where they sow all manner of grain, and plant vineyards; which recompense their pains with a plentiful harvest, and a joyful vintage.

Ver. 38. *He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*] His blessing also makes the inhabitants fruitful, as well as their ground: they grow exceeding populous, together with their flocks and their herds, which by the increase of people are not diminished.

Ver. 39. *Again they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.*] But when they prove ungrateful to him, he quite alters the course of his providence; and on a sudden sends some grievous pestilence, which lessens their numbers; or lays them low by tyrannical oppressors (into whose hands he delivers them), by dearth, and other calamities, which make them pine away in grief and sorrow.

Ver. 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.*] Their princes and the most eminent persons in their country are not able to preserve themselves from contempt and scorn; to which they are so openly exposed, that they who had troops of followers and attendants are utterly deserted, and forced to walk in solitary places to hide their shame, without any means that they can see to recover their thrones, out of which they are disgracefully thrown.

Ver. 41. *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.*] Which he bestows upon some poor despicable person, whom, from a low condition, he raises to the highest dignity; and gives him a very numerous issue, to maintain and continue the honour he hath conferred on him.

Ver. 42. *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*] Which is a great encouragement to the righteous; who herein behold with joy the wise and just providence of Almighty God: but gives the wicked (who under those bad princes were insolent, and full of proud boasts) such a rebuke, that they hang down their heads, and are confoundedly put to silence.

Ver. 43. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.*] And therefore whosoever will be truly wise, ought to mark and ponder such passages as these in the Divine government; that they may make others, who are less considerate, understand how very kind and gracious the Lord is, to those who study to please him, and to obtain his favour by dutiful obedience, and humble submission to him.

PSALM CVIII.

A Song or Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title tells us this *Song-Psalm* (see the reason of this name upon Psal. lxvii.) was made by David: and was placed here, as I conjecture, because now he was in a hopeful way to perfect some victories which he had begun to win; whereby some of those captives in strange lands (mentioned ver. 2, 3. of the foregoing Psalm) were rescued and set at liberty. What those nations were, over whom he was about to triumph, see in the title of Psalm lx. For the latter part of this Psalm, from ver. 6. to the end, is the very same (with some light variations) with the eight last verses of that; as the former part of it is very little different from the five last verses of Psalm lvii. Which the Psalmist, I suppose, here placed instead of those wherewith the sixtieth begins (though he retains all the latter end of it), because now, as I said, he had made some progress in those wars, which he was but entering upon when he made that sixtieth Psalm. And therefore here he begins with thanks to God for his mercy, as there he laments the ill condition wherein he found the affairs of the kingdom when he came to the crown.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.*] My heart is ready, O most gracious God, it is firmly resolved to give thee most solemn thanks: my tongue also, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall sing of thy goodness; and, with all the expressions of joy, set forth thy praise.

Ver. 2. *Awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early.*] Nor shall any of the instruments of music be silent, but accompany my hymns: which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising of the sun.

Ver. 3. *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*] Nor will I merely make thee my private acknowledgments, but publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung: yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am for what thou hast begun to do for us.

Ver. 4. *For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.*] For it is fit my thankfulness should be as boundless as thy mercy: which infinitely transcends all my expressions; and hath nothing equal to it, but thy faithfulness and truth.

Ver. 5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth.*] Be thou more and more exalted in these, O God; and raise to thyself thereby the highest praises: spread the fame of them every where, that thou mayest be glorified throughout the world.

Ver. 6. *That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.*] Especially now, I beseech thee to grant my humble petitions, that by thy mighty power, accompanying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from their oppressors.

Ver. 7. *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*] Why should I doubt of it, and not rather rejoice in assured hope of a perfect victory? since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said he will deliver them by my hand; (2 Sam. iii. 18.) and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2.) of all the country about Samaria; which I will distribute under such officers as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 8. *Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver.*] Gilead,

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also, and Manasseh, who were lately under another king, (2 Sam. ii. 9.) have submitted themselves to me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority; these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are united to the royal tribe of Judah; which (according to the prophecy of our forefather, Gen. xlix. 10.) supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom.

Ver. 9. *Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.*] Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country; for I will tread the Moabites under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude: (2 Sam. viii. 2.) I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves: (ver. 14.) the Philistines also, whom I have begun to smite, (2 Sam. v. 17. 22, &c.) shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to submit unto me, as their conquering lord, (viii. 1.)

Ver. 10. *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*] These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, by what power or force I shall be able to enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? who is it that will conduct me into Idumea, and make me a master of it?

Ver. 11. *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?*] But I can soon answer myself: for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might; who formerly indeed didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies; (1 Sam. xxxi. 1. 7.) but now, I hope, wilt graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

Ver. 12. *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*] Do not frustrate these hopes; but afford us thy help against the Syrians also, (2 Sam. viii. 5.) now that they distress us: for no human force is able to deliver us, nor have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

Ver. 13. *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts: for God will utterly rout our enemies; and tread them down like the mire in the streets.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

Most interpreters consent to the opinion of Aben Ezra and D. Kimchi, that David (to whom the title ascribes this Psalm) hath respect here, in the first place, to the grievous persecution which he suffered by Saul, and some of his court: who would let him enjoy no rest, but having driven him from his own house, pursued him so close, wheresoever he heard he was, that he could have no certain dwelling: but became like a locust, (as he speaks ver. 23.) which, having no nest, (as Bochartus observes, par. ii. lib. iv. de Animal. Sac. cap. 2.) leaps or flies from hedge to hedge; as he did from place to place. To provoke Saul to this rage against him, as they all loaded him with many calumnies, (which made David curse them to Saul's face, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) so one especially among the rest, who is generally thought to be Doeg the Edomite, was notoriously guilty of this wickedness: whom, by a prophetical spirit, he here most solemnly curses, in a direful manner; and pronounces the heaviest judgment upon him and his family: his inhuman villany being so great, that it made him an exact picture of the traitor Judas, to whom the apostle St. Peter, (Acts i. 20.) applies the eighth verse of this Psalm. The rest of which is spent in prayer to God, against such false accusers; and in vows of the praises he would give him, when he was delivered from the mischief which thereby they designed to him. Accordingly, when he was settled in his throne, he sent this Psalm, among others, unto the master of music in the tabernacle; to perpetuate the memory of God's mercy to him.

Concerning such imprecations as we here meet withal, see the Argument of Psal. xxxv. which is of the same nature with this.

Ver. 1. *HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise.*] O God, the supreme judge of the world, who, as thou hast given me hitherto continual cause to praise thee, so I hope wilt still vindicate my honour; I appeal unto thy majesty: beseeching thee to declare thyself on my side; and make it appear that I am innocent.

Ver. 2. *For the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*] For men of no conscience have taken the liberty to invent the most mischievous lies of me; whereby, though they always speak me fair to my face, they have wickedly traduced me to Saul behind my back:

Ver. 3. *They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.*] And spread those false reports so diligently, that I find they have made me odious every where: and thereupon, without any provocation from me, have levied war against me, to take away my life, (1 Sam. xxiii. 8. 25.)

Ver. 4. *For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.*] Who have been so far from doing them any harm, that I have deserved well of them: (1 Sam. xix. 4, 5.) and even now, when they requite my kindness with endeavours to destroy me, do nothing but recommend myself by prayer to thy protection; refusing to make use of the opportunity I had to revenge myself upon them, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 10, &c.)

Ver. 5. *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*] And yet this will not mollify them, but still they are so extremely ungrateful, as to repay my kindness with new attempts to do me mischief; (1 Sam. xxvi. 2.) and the more affection I express, with the greater hatred am I prosecuted.

Ver. 6. *Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand.*] So implacable is his malice, who is the principal author of the calumnies wherewith I am loaded, (1 Sam. xxii. 9. 11.) against whom, therefore, I implore thy justice, O most righteous Judge of the world: let the worst man that can be found be appointed to hear his cause when he is accused, and his most malicious adversary plead against him.

Ver. 7. *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.*] When sentence is given let him be condemned to be as guilty, as really he is; and if he petition for a pardon, let it not only be rejected, but prove an aggravation of his crimes.

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Ver. 8. *Let his days be few; and let another take his office.*] Let him (and the false traitor, who in future times will use the Messiah as now they do me) be cut off before his time: and his office, (1 Sam. xxi. 7. xxii. 9.) wherein he behaves himself with such insufferable insolence and falsehood, be transferred to a better man.

Ver. 9. *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*] Let not his fatherless children succeed him in any thing that he hath; nor his widow have any thing left to maintain her.

Ver. 10. *Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.*] Let them not have so much as a house wherein to put their heads; but be perpetual vagabonds, supporting a miserable life by begging an alms; and seeking where to lodge, because their own dwellings are laid waste and desolate.

Ver. 11. *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labour.*] Let his creditor (pretending a judgment) seize on all his estate; and a stranger, by that means, reap the fruit of all his care and labour.

Ver. 12. *Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.*] Let no man shew the least kindness to his memory; or upon that account bestow an alms upon his fatherless children.

Ver. 13. *Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*] Let them rather be odious for his sake, and the sooner destroyed: so that they be the last of the name; and, in the next generation, not one of that family be found.

Ver. 14. *Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.*] But, according to the just sentence of thy law, (Exod. xx. 5.) let the punishments (which were due long ago, but thy patience moved thee to forbear) fall all upon him; let him suffer for the sins of his progenitors on both sides; in whose wicked steps he would not cease to tread.

Ver. 15. *Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*] Let it be seen that their wickedness is not forgotten, though committed many years ago; but prosecute it with a continued vengeance, till nobody remember that there were such people in the world.

Ver. 16. *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*] This will be but a deserved recompence for all his cruelties: for as he let all benefits slip out of his mind, and was ungrateful to those who had obliged him, so he had no sense of that common compassion which is due to the calamitous; but when he saw me in a necessitous condition, destitute of friends, and dejected in spirit, made no other use of it but to persecute me to death.

Ver. 17. *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*] What can be more just, than that the mischief, in which he delighted, and both wished and designed to others, should fall upon himself? and that he should never meet with the blessing of those righteous courses which he always hated and avoided?

Ver. 18. *As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.*] His very business was to slander others, every where; taking a pride in the mischievous effects of his cursed lies: and therefore let him feel the miserable fruit of his wickedness, spreading itself, like the water he drinks, into every vein of him; and sticking as close to him as oil unto the bones.

Ver. 19. *Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.*] Let him be involved in perpetual misfortunes and miseries, and never be able to shake them off: let him be hampered with straits and difficulties, without any possibility of getting out.

Ver. 20. *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul.*] This shall most certainly be the reward, which the righteous Lord will give to my malicious adversaries for all the pains they have taken, by slanderous reports and calumnies, to take away my life:

Ver. 21. *But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*] Which I commend to thy protection, O Lord, the governor of all things; beseeching thee to take my part, and appear for me; though not for my honour, yet for thy own; whose kindness is so exceeding bountiful unto all, that for that reason I am encouraged to hope thou wilt deliver me; to whom thou hast engaged thyself by many promises of mercy.

Ver. 22. *For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*] Which I never needed more than now: for I am so poor, and forsaken of all my friends, (1 Sam. xxv. 8, &c.) that I am ready to faint away with grief and sorrow, like one that is wounded at the very heart.

Ver. 23. *I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.*] The evening shadow doth not vanish sooner than I, from the place of my present abode: (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 3. 5. xxiii. 13, 14.) which I am forced to quit on a sudden; and to wander like the locust, which flies, or is driven, with the wind, uncertainly from place to place.

Ver. 24. *My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*] And for want of food in those desert places, I am sometimes scarce able to remove: for my body, which heretofore was plump and fat, (1 Sam. xvi. 12.) is now grown lank and thin, like one of those miserable lean creatures.

Ver. 25. *I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*] Which, instead of moving their pity, hath exposed me to such contempt and scorn, that when I am seen by any of them, they deride and scoff at me as an undone wretch, that vainly hopes to escape their hands.

Ver. 26. *Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy.*] But my hope is, that thou, O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most gracious God, wilt seasonably interpose for my relief: and deliver me, out of that tender mercy, which is wont to extend itself to those who have nothing else to depend upon.

Ver. 27. *That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou Lord hast done it.*] Whereby they themselves may be convinced, and forced to acknowledge, that, not by chance, no more than by my small forces, but by thy almighty power alone, and thy care of me, O Lord, I am delivered.

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Ver. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.*] Thy blessing and protection I implore; which if thou wilt vouchsafe me, let them go on to curse and slander me as long as they please; it shall not hurt me: nay, let them assault me with armed force, they shall only be confounded at their vain attempt; and give thy servant the greater cause to rejoice at their disappointment.

Ver. 29. *Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame; and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.*] Which shall so increase the confusion of my malicious adversaries, that they shall not be able to bear the disgrace: but wish they could hide themselves from the sight of their shame, which their own wickedness hath brought upon them.

Ver. 30. *I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*] In hope of which defeat, I vow beforehand to the Lord the best expressions of my gratitude that I am able to make: not only in private, but in the greatest assemblies; where I will not cease to praise his almighty love.

Ver. 31. *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*] And bid them trust in God, who hath pleaded my cause, and rescued me from death; and will ever be the advocate of him that hath no helper, but depends on his goodness, to deliver him from the hands of those judges, who prosecute the unjust sentence they have passed upon him to lose his life.

PSALM CX.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

There is the same reason to think this Psalm was composed by David (not by some other concerning David), that there is to conclude all the rest to be so, which have the same title. And then, as it is very plain he speaks of some person much greater than himself, whom he calls his Lord, so it can be no other but the Lord Christ, of whom he here prophesies. Not, as he is wont to do elsewhere, with respect to himself, in the first place, as his type and figure; but in plain words, which can belong to none but Christ alone: for no other king but he can be said in any sense to sit at God's right hand; nor was there any priest of the order of Melchisedec that could be a shadow of him.

David, indeed, seems once to have exercised the office of a priest, when he blessed the people, at the bringing of the ark to Zion, (2 Sam. vi. 18.) and so to have been then both king and priest in one person, as Melchisedec was; but not a priest for ever, on whom the office was perpetually established, and that by an oath; as it was on the priest here mentioned.

And therefore it is in vain to endeavour to accommodate any part of this Psalm to David; who conquered many of the neighbouring countries, smote their kings, made them bring him tributes, and at last smote the *head of the country of Rabbah* (as some render the last words of the sixth verse of this Psalm), that is, the king of the children of Ammon: but still we are to seek how the rest can be applied to him, who never had any pretence to such an authority as is here described, nor can in any sense call himself *my Lord;* but as our Lord Christ hath demonstrated, spake concerning him, (Matt. xxii. 43, &c.) and his exaltation, after his resurrection from the dead, (as St. Peter and St. Paul also shew, Acts ii. 34, 35. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. iv. 1. 13. v. 6.) when he set up another priesthood, and abolished that of Moses; which change is here predicted.

And though the Jews have taken a great deal of pains to wrest this Psalm to another sense, yet they are so divided in their opinions about it (speaking inconsistent things, like drunken men, as St. Chrysostom's words are, or rather, says he, like men in the dark, running against one another), that from thence alone we may be satisfied they are in the wrong, and have their eyes blinded, else they would not have embraced such interpretations as those, which may be seen in them that have written upon this Psalm, which some of the Jews themselves (such as R. Moses Hadarsan, Saadias Gaon, and divers others whom I might mention) have been forced to acknowledge belongs to Christ; and is a very plain prediction of his Divinity, his royal dignity, his priesthood, and his victories and triumphs, which the Psalmist sets forth as follows.

Ver. 1. *THE Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*] This is the decree of the eternal Lord, that the great person whom we expect, and whom I honour as my Lord and Master, shall be advanced (after his sufferings) to the highest dignity (1 Kings ii. 19.) in the heavens; and reign with him as the King of all the world, till he hath perfectly subdued (Josh. x. 24.) the most powerful opposers of his kingdom; and overcome death itself, by whom all mankind are conquered, (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.)

Ver. 2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*] The eternal Lord, who hath thus decreed to honour thee, O most mighty Prince, will make Zion, first of all, to feel how powerful thy sceptre is, (Acts i. 8. ii. 34. 37.) and thence extend thy empire over all the earth; where I wish thou mayest, and foretell thou wilt, prevail over all infidelity, idolatry, superstition, and impiety; which will set themselves against thy authority.

Ver. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*] For in the day when thy forces, (2 Tim. ii. 3.) completely armed with a Divine power, (Acts iv. 33.) shall march forth to subdue the world unto thy obedience: they that are fit for thy kingdom (Luke ix. 62. Acts xiii. 48.) shall cheerfully submit themselves, and present thee with free-will-offerings, in token of their absolute subjection unto thee, (Acts ii. 45. iv. 34.) And great shall be the number of chosen men, (1 John ii. 13.) who, glad to see the night of ignorance gone, shall, at thy first appearance, by the celestial blessing, fall unto thee as thick as the morning dew.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*] And happy are they who live under thy government; for the Lord hath unchangeably resolved that thou shalt be a priest as well as king; with full power to bless all thy subjects, not only in that, but in all future ages, even to all eternity:

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for thou shalt not be a priest like those after Aaron's order, who die to make room for others; but, like that great king and priest Melchisedec, shalt neither have any predecessor nor successor in thine office, but continue a royal priest for evermore, (Heb. vii.)

Ver. 5. *The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*] Who, as he will be most compassionate to all those that heartily acknowledge him for their Lord, and submit unto his government; so will break in pieces the greatest powers on earth that provoke his displeasure by obstinate opposal of his authority at thy right hand.

Ver. 6. *He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*] From whence he shall demonstrate himself to all the heathen world, to be their Lawgiver and their Judge; taking a severe vengeance on those that persecute his subjects, and destroying, at last, even that mighty empire which shall then rule over many countries.

Ver. 7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way: and therefore shall he lift up the head.*] But before all this, he shall first humble himself to the meanest condition; not living in the state of a king here in this world, but of a wayfaring man, (Luke ix. 56.) who is content with such provision as he meets withal. For which cause, after the enduring many hardships, even death itself, he shall be highly exalted to his royal and priestly dignity in the heavens; from whence he shall never fall.

PSALM CXI.

Hallelujah, i. e. *Praise the Lord.*

ARGUMENT.

It is certain this is the title of the Psalm, which consists of as many short metres as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and therefore cannot begin with *Hallelujah,* whose first letter is the *fifth,* not the first letter in that alphabet. In which order it proceeds for the better help of the memory: being composed thus artificially, that every one, as well as the singers (to whom the *Hallelujah,* perhaps, is particularly directed), might have in their minds a brief form of thanking God (especially upon festival days) for the wonderful things he had done for that nation.

It was a meditation which the author had in time of peace and quiet; for in distress, or immediately after a great deliverance, men's spirits are not at liberty to use such art and curiosity in their composures, as there is in this Psalm; being full at those seasons of such passions as make them neglect it, even when they are inclined to use it, (see Psalm xxv.) For which reason, I think, Theodoret's opinion hath no ground; that the Psalmist hath respect to the great victory obtained by Jehoshaphat over the Ammonites and other nations, who invaded his kingdom; for which they gave thanks to God presently after, (2 Chron. xx.) It is more likely that David, who composed those larger forms of commemoration, Psalm cv. and cvi. made this (as I said) for a compendious remembrance of what is there more largely delivered. And that he might not exceed the number of the ten commandments (as some give the reason of it) in the verses of this Psalm, the metres of the two last are so short, that they have each of them *three* letters of the alphabet in them, whereas all the former have but *two.*

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*] I will make my thankful acknowledgments to the Lord, not only with my lips, or with some slight affections of my mind, but with all my heart and soul: and that not only in the private society of those good men whom I am more intimately acquainted withal, but in the public congregation of all his people.

Ver. 2. *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*] Who ought to join together to praise the Lord for his mighty and wonderful works, which it will not cost them much labour to understand; for they are easily found out by all those who take any pleasure in such inquiries.

Ver. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*] And there is not one of them but is full of majesty and splendour; and the fruit of his infinite bounty, and faithfulness to his promise, which he still expresses towards us, and will do so for ever.

Ver. 4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.*] And such is his goodness, lest we should forget his benefits, he hath instituted solemn times for the commemoration of the wonders he hath done for us, (Exod. xii. 14. xiii. 3. 9, &c.) which are everlasting testimonies, that we serve a most gracious and compassionate Lord.

Ver. 5. *He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.*] Who gave our forefathers (whom by his wonderful works he possessed with the fear of him, Exod. xiv. 31.) the spoil of the Egyptians, (Exod. xii. 35, 36.) and afterward fed them with manna in the wilderness, (Exod. xvi.) according to his covenant, which he had made long before, (Gen. xv. 14.) and will never forget in future ages.

Ver. 6. *He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.*] He hath evidently demonstrated to his people the greatness of his power in destroying Sihon the Amorite, (Deut. ii. 24, 25.) and Og the king of Bashan, (Deut. iii. 21. 24.) with the rest of the Amorites and other nations, in the land of Canaan: (Josh. x. 6. 11, 12, &c.) which he took from the ancient inhabitants, that he might give it us for our possession.

Ver. 7. *The works of his hands are verity and judgments: all his commandments are sure.*] In which he did them no wrong; but was exactly just in fulfilling his promise to us, and in executing his judgments upon those wicked wretches, (Deut. ix. 5. Gen. xv. 16.) For all his orders of either kind are in pursuance of most righteous decrees.

Ver. 8. *They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*] Which he doth not alter and change at pleasure, but hath settled as eternal rules: because there is no partiality or inquiry in them; but they were enacted with a sincere respect to all men's good and happiness.

Ver. 9. *He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*] And it was in conformity to these that he at first sent Moses and Aaron to bring our fathers out of Egypt, (Exod. vi. 6.) and then exercised his supreme authority

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over them, in giving them a law, which he tied them by a covenant perpetually to observe; (Exod. xix. 4, 5. xxiv. 8.) appearing in such majesty to them, (Exod. xx. 18. xxiv. 10, 11.) as might possess them with an awful regard to him; and make them for ever dread, by any profaneness, to offend him, who infinitely excels all other beings.

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*] And, indeed, it is the first and principal point of wisdom to fear the Lord, and carefully observe his commandments; the practice of which gives men a better understanding of what is good for them, than any politic maxims can infuse into them. Therefore let the Lord be for ever praised, who hath given us these good and wholesome laws: and thereby shewn us the way to eternal honour and praise.

PSALM CXII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is composed after the very same manner with the former; and seems to be intended for a short commentary upon the last verse of it: shewing how well and wisely they consult their own good and happiness, who observe God's commandments; especially those about charity, or doing good to others. Of which that they might be always mindful, the Psalm is contrived, for the help of their memories, into as many short versicles as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Hallelujah therefore is no part of them, but the title prefixed to the Psalm, (see Argument upon Psalm cxi.) to excite them to praise the Lord; who had made it their present interest to be religious.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*] Happy is that man whose chiefest care it is to please the Lord, by observing his commandments: which will yield, in the issue, the highest pleasure and satisfaction to himself.

Ver. 2. *His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*] And procure a blessing also upon all belonging to him: first, upon his children, and those that shall descend from them in future times; who shall fare the better, and be more powerful and prosperous, for the sincere virtue of their pious forefathers:

Ver. 3. *Wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever.*] And next on his estate; which shall not only be rich and plentiful, but so firmly settled and entailed on his posterity, that they shall reap the perpetual fruit of his justice and charity.

Ver. 4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*] Or if any affliction come, it will be so far from making him unhappy, that, besides the Divine comforts imparted to him for his support, it will make the virtue of upright men the more illustrious: while one exercises meekness and sweetness to those that provoke him, another forgives offences, and pities the instruments of his trouble; and a third exercises the greater justice of mercy, and will not be tempted to do any dishonest or cruel thing for his own deliverance.

Ver. 5. *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*] But, above all other men, he leads the most comfortable life, who is so kind, that he supplies the needs of others; giving to one, and lending to another, as occasion serves: and yet ordering all his affairs so judiciously, that he doth not impair, but rather maintain, the good estate of his own family.

Ver. 6. *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*] Sure it will not be in the power of the most mighty and malicious enemies (though they may disturb him) quite to overthrow him: and when they are forgotten, or mentioned with contempt, the worthy actions of this sort of righteous men shall be celebrated with never-ceasing praises.

Ver. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*] He is not affrighted and discomposed at the false reports that are raised of him; nor at the rumour of dangers which threaten him: being prepared for such things as these, by a settled trust and hope in God; that he will take care of him, who hath been as kind as he could to others in their distresses.

Ver. 8. *His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.*] This confidence is the prop and support of his soul; which will not let him be dismayed: but makes him expect the time, when he shall be able securely to look upon all his enemies.

Ver. 9. *He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*] He doth not merely heap up riches for himself; but dispenses them to others, especially to the poor and needy, with a liberal hand: nor is he weary of well-doing, but ever producing some new fruit of his charity, which shall gain him the greatest honour, and raise him to an illustrious degree of power and authority.

Ver. 10. *The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.*] At the sight of which the wicked (who shall not be able to obstruct it) shall be extremely vexed; or rather furiously enraged: he shall pine away with grief, envy, and impatience, to see himself and his companions disappointed in all that they wished; either of good to themselves, or evil to the righteous.

PSALM CXIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, with the five next which follow, the Hebrews call by the name of *Hallel*, or *Hymn:* which they recited at their table (as in the new moons and other feasts, so) in the paschal night, after they had eaten the lamb; concluding it with *Hallelujah:* which is the title of this Psalm (as of the two foregoing), to excite all God's people, especially those that constantly attended in the tabernacle, to the praises of God's good providence; which extends itself as far as this earth where we live: several instances of which the Psalmist here mentions.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.*] O ye ministers of the Lord, and whosoever you are that love his service, praise his eternal majesty: be not remiss in this heavenly

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employment; but, with your best affections, praise the power, wisdom, and goodness, of his eternal providence.

Ver. 2. *Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.*] Praise him now in this present age; and wish that those incomparable perfections of his may be celebrated with the praises of those that live in future times, as long as the world shall last.

Ver. 3. *From the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.*] And not only here in this little spot of earth; but wheresoever the sun shines, and lets men see how splendid and glorious his majesty is.

Ver. 4. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*] For all the nations of the earth are his; and but a little parcel of his supreme dominion; which extends far beyond the sun, and moon, and stars; whose light is but a dim resemblance of the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 5. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?*] Do not think that any of them (though worshipped by other nations as gods) is comparable to that great Lord, and our most gracious God, whom we adore: for the very place where his glorious majesty resides is far higher than they.

Ver. 6. *Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!*] And it is a great condescension in him, that he will have any respect to the most illustrious of those celestial bodies: though he be so gracious also as to extend his kind and careful providence, even to us who dwell upon this earth.

Ver. 7. *He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.*] Where, among other manifest tokens of his stupendous goodness, he is pleased to take special notice of those whom the world despises: and to raise them out of a mean, nay, sordid condition, to such a pitch of honour and dignity.

Ver. 8. *That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.*] That at last they are advanced to sit upon a throne; and made the governors of his own people, (1 Sam. ii. 8. 2 Sam. vii. 8, 9. compared with 1 Sam. xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 9. *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.*] And, which is still more strange, he opens the barren womb (which according to the course of nature would have brought forth nothing), and makes a numerous family spring from thence, to the great joy of her that bears them, (1 Sam. i. 20. ii. 21.) Praise the Lord in these, and such-like wonderful works of his.

PSALM CXIV.

ARGUMENT.

As the foregoing Psalm puts them in mind of several works of the Divine Providence, about particular persons: so this makes a brief narration of some miraculous work; wherein the Lord declared his power, when he brought the whole Jewish nation out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1. *WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language.*] When our forefathers, with their whole family, were brought out of Egypt; and not one of them left behind among that barbarous people who had long oppressed them;

Ver. 2. *Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*] There was a most glorious appearance of God among them, by that bright cloud, the token of his presence: which then had no other peculiar place for its sanctuary; but stood over the whole camp of Israel, (Exod. xiii. 21. Numb. xiv. 14.) whom he then took for his peculiar kingdom, (Exod. xix. 6.)

Ver. 3. *The sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back.*] At which appearance the Red Sea forsook its channel, and left a dry path for them to march through: (Exod. xiv. 21. 24.) and so did Jordan also afterward; to make way for their easy entrance into Canaan, (Josh. iii. 15, 16.)

Ver. 4. *The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*] All the mountains, great and small, which adjoined unto Sinai, trembled and leaped, like so many affrighted rams, or little lambs, before the same most dreadful majesty, (Exod. xix. 18.)

Ver. 5. *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?*] To what else shall we ascribe that sudden ebb of the sea? and that, no less strange, retreat of Jordan, when it overflowed all its banks?

Ver. 6. *Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?*] What made the mountains and hills leap up, like affrighted rams or lambs; as if they would run away from the place where they were so firmly fixed?

Ver. 7. *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.*] But only the glorious presence of the Divine Majesty, who was then bringing his people to the rest he had promised to give them. And let the whole earth be afraid and tremble before that great Lord who hath honoured us so far, as peculiarly to be our God:

Ver. 8. *Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*] And was so kind as to supply the necessities of our forefathers, even when they murmured against him, by a new miracle: bringing out of hard rocks, as hard as flint, such plenty of water, as if they had been dissolved into lakes or rivers, (Exod. xvii. 8. Numb. xx. 11.)

PSALM CXV.

ARGUMENT.

There is great reason to think, that this Psalm was made in some time of sore distress; when their pagan enemies began to boast and brag, as if their gods were too hard for the God of Israel. But by whom it was made, or on what particular occasion, there are so many conjectures, that it will be no presumption to interpose mine, which is this: that when Jehoshaphat saw that vast army (which we read of 2 Chron. xx. 2.) composed of several nations coming against him; and, after his prayer to God for deliverance, was encouraged by a prophet to hope for it; (ver. 14, 15.) and had by the Levites given him thanks for this hope; he, or that prophet, composed this Hymn to quicken and confirm their faith in God: unto which you read he exhorted them, (ver. 20.) And it is likely that this was the Hymn which, by common consent, the

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singers were appointed to use, when they went out to encounter those enemies: saying not only those words, which we read there, (ver. 21.) "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever;" but these, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake," &c.

Ver. 1. *NOT unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*] Prosper our arms, O Lord, and give us the victory over these enemies that invade us: not that we may grow more famous (no, we have no thoughts of the glory that will accrue to ourselves thereby); but that thy Divine Majesty may be honoured, and thy goodness and faithfulness to thy promises be made the more illustrious.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*] What a sad thing will it be to hear the nations that surround us insult, not so much over us, as over thee; saying, What is become of their God in whom they trusted? if he be so powerful as they boast, why doth he not deliver them?

Ver. 3. *But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased.*] Let them know that thou art infinitely superior to them and all their gods; being the possessor of the heavens, as well as the earth, (2 Chron. xx. 6.) whom no power of theirs can hurt, or so much as restrain; but art able to do whatsoever thou pleasest for their confusion, and for our deliverance.

Ver. 4. *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*] Their idols cannot hinder it in the least; who are of no more value than the silver and gold of which they are made; and are so far from being the makers of things, that they themselves are the work of those that adore them.

Ver. 5. *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.*] They are mere lifeless images; that have mouths, but cannot give a word of advice, or of encouragement and comfort, to their supplicants: and eyes also, but cannot see the devotion wherewith they look up unto them, or prostrate themselves before them.

Ver. 6. *They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not.*] Let their worshippers cry to them never so loudly, they cannot hear a word: all the frankincense and sweet odours which they burn to them are merely lost; for they cannot smell them.

Ver. 7. *They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.*] Though they have thunderbolts in their hands they feel them not; nor are able to do either good or harm: they cannot stir a foot from the place where they stand, unless they be carried; nor make so much noise as a fly; being utterly void of breath, as well as of sense and reason.

Ver. 8. *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*] To what then, but to those idols, shall we compare the makers of them, and such as confide in them? who are mere images of men: having eyes, but do not see that the brutes are more excellent than such gods; and that the least help is not to be expected from them.

Ver. 9. *O Israel, trust thou in the Lord; he is their help and their shield.*] O ye Israelites, who by the Divine favour are better instructed, repose that confidence in the eternal Lord, which they do in those vanities: and he will not only protect and defend you against all the assaults of your enemies, but help you to overcome them, (2 Chron. xx. 9.)

Ver. 10. *O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield.*] O ye priests and Levites, do you above all others rely upon that eternal Lord; whose praise you sing, and to whom you offer continual sacrifice: for he will never fail, not only to protect, but to assist, all such as piously confide in him.

Ver. 11. *Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield.*] And let all that fear the Lord, and devoutly worship him (of whatsoever nation they be), place the like confidence in his almighty goodness: for he will never forsake those that depend on him alone (though they be not of the seed of Abraham), but defend them also in all dangers, and aid them against all their enemies.

Ver. 12. *The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us: he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron.*] We have had abundant experience of his care over us in all ages; and therefore, though now for the present our enemies afflict us, yet let us believe that the Lord will do us good, and bless us with a glorious deliverance: all the house of Israel shall see how kind he is; especially they that minister unto him in his holy temple.

Ver. 13. *He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.*] And he will not forget those pious proselytes that are come to worship him there, as the only God; but, without any respect of persons, give them his blessing also: which shall not be denied, either to old or young, to rich or poor.

Ver. 14. *The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.*] Nor will he grant you only a single blessing, by sending a present deliverance: but heap his benefits, and multiply his mercies, upon you; and upon all those that shall succeed you.

Ver. 15. *You are blessed of the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*] Ye are a happy people, who live under the care, and love, and benediction, of that mighty Lord, whose power nothing can confine: for he is not made (like the gentile gods), but himself created both the heaven and the earth.

Ver. 16. *The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*] In which he cannot be comprehended neither; for his empire extends farther than you can see; to the heavens, which are above these visible heavens: from whence his providence reaches down, even to us the children of men; whom he hath placed upon this earth, to admire and praise his infinite majesty.

Ver. 17. *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*] And therefore will not suffer us to be rooted out, as our enemies design; (2 Chron. xx. 11.) for then the earth would have none in it to sing his praises: which the dead, who dwell in the silent grave, cannot celebrate.

Ver. 18. *But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the Lord.*] But will continue us still alive, that we may praise the Lord, and speak good of his name, as we do at this time; (2 Chron. xx. 21, 22.) and leave those to succeed us, who shall continue his praises in all future generations to the world's end. Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

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PSALM CXVI.

ARGUMENT.

I do not understand the reason why Theodoret applies this Psalm to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, when it agrees so exactly to the condition of David in his flight from his son Absalom, (which seems to be mentioned ver. 11.) when Ahithophel and others proved very false to him; and he had little or nothing to depend upon, but only the goodness of the Almighty; who was pleased to plead his cause, and deliver him. For which he resolved to be very thankful, and to call all his friends to rejoice with him, as I have expressed it, ver. 13. where the first words sufficiently declare the sense; but I have added more to explain the phrase, which is borrowed from the custom of those days: about which the reader may consult Mr. Mede, p. 483. last edit. In this resolution he was so serious that he repeats it in the conclusion; and saith he will pay his vows in the midst of Jerusalem: from whence the history tells us he was forced to fly, in great haste, to save his life, (2 Sam. xv. 14.)

This seems to be the occasion of the Psalm, which may very well befit any other persons that receive any great deliverance from God; and accordingly I will order the Paraphrase, and fit it for the expressing of their devout affections.

Ver. 1. *I LOVE the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*] O how I love the Lord! he knows that I love him exceedingly: and there is the greatest reason for it; because he hath so graciously heard my prayer, when in my distress I cried unto him.

Ver. 2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*] I cannot choose but mention again this love of his, in granting so readily my desires: which encourages, and engages me, on all such occasions, to address myself, with thankful acknowledgments, unto him; and to the last breath of my life, to expect deliverance from him.

Ver. 3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*] Great was my misery; exceeding great: death itself and the grave were ready to seize on me; and I saw no way to escape: nay, I myself, in the anguish of my soul, inconsiderately cast myself into danger.

Ver. 4. *Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*] Yet I did not despond in these straits; but made the mighty, wise, and good providence of God my refuge; to whom I cried, saying, O Lord, who wast before all things, and commandest them as thou pleasest; rescue me, I most humbly beseech thee, from those dangers which threaten my destruction.

Ver. 5. *Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*] And it was not in vain that I cried unto him; for the Lord hath shewn me how ready he is to do good, and how faithful in his promises: and withal how gentle in his punishments, and inclinable to pardon our faults; which demonstrates that no people serve such a gracious master as our merciful God.

Ver. 6. *The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*] I had perished, I am sure, if I had relied only on my own wisdom, or the skill and policy of others: but the Lord was my hope, who preserves the most simple and incautious souls, when they commit themselves to him, and wholly depend on his providence. I ought to say so; who was reduced to a most forlorn estate, and then, by his assistance, in a wonderful manner delivered.

Ver. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*] What hast thou then to do, O my soul, who hast been so tempestuously tossed, but to settle thyself again in peace and tranquillity; loving and praising the Lord, who hath very many ways expressed his bounty most liberally to thee.

Ver. 8. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*] For when the dangers of death surrounded me, thou, O my God, didst deliver me: whenever any sadness seized on me, thou hast been my comforter: and when I have been in danger of hurts, maims, or bruises (or of falling into the hands of my enemies), thou still hast been my protector.

Ver. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*] I ought therefore, and I am resolved, to employ all that health and cheerfulness, that soundness of body and mind, that peace and safety, which thou hast thus graciously bestowed on me, in doing thee (to whom as my sovereign Lord I owe) all faithful service; as long as I stay in this world.

Ver. 10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.*] I had nothing, I will thankfully remember, to depend upon, but only thy kind providence: in this I placed my trust; in this I gloried to others, when I was in my greatest straits: for the truth is, I was extremely miserable.

Ver. 11. *I said in my haste, All men are liars.*] Pressed on all sides with dangers; from which, when I fled as fast as I was able, (2 Sam. xv. 14. xvii. 16. 22.) I concluded it was vain to rely on the friendship and help of men: for they in whom I trusted proved so false and treacherous, (xv. 31.) that I had reason to think the rest would deceive and fail my expectation, when I was in the greatest need of them.

Ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*] O the greatness of thy love! who even then didst interpose and deliver me, by the assistance of some faithful friends, who still stuck to me! (2 Sam. xvii. 13, &c.) What shall I render unto the Lord, who heard my prayer? (xv. 31.) How shall I shew myself grateful to him for this, and for all other his benefits, which he hath heaped upon me.

Ver. 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*] All that I can do cannot make him more happy: but, as my duty binds me, I will praise the Lord, and speak good of his name, and give him thanks, in the best and most solemn manner I am able: I will call all my friends together to rejoice with me, and taking the cup, which we call the *cup of deliverance* (because, when blessed and set apart, we are wont to commemorate the blessings we have received), I will magnify the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God my Saviour before all the company; and will drink myself, and then give it to them, that they may praise his name together with me.

Ver. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*] And whatsoever I have pro-

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mised thee, O Lord, in the time of my distress, I will faithfully engage myself to perform before them all: they shall see I am not forgetful of thee, who wast so mindful of me in my trouble.

Ver. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*] As, indeed, thou art of all good men, whose lives thou preservest as a precious jewel: and wilt not give them up to the pleasure of their enemies; nor suffer them to be lost, but by thy special providence.

Ver. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.*] Accept, good Lord, of these my resolutions; for I am sensible that I am thy servant; every way thy servant, and entirely obliged to be faithful to thee; both by my birth and by my education; and by this marvellous deliverance, whereby thou hast rescued me from the power of death, which had, in a manner, taken hold of me.

Ver. 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.*] I can never sure prove ungrateful to thee, unto whom I am tied by so many bonds; but will always be making thee my most thankful solemn acknowledgments for the benefits I have received: and together with those praises, and thanksgivings, wait upon thy goodness, for the like mercies in time to come.

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*] I resolve again, religiously to make good these, and all other my vows, wherein I stand engaged to the Lord: and that not only in private; but here at this solemnity, in the face of all his people:

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*] When they are gathered together at his house, in the midst of the holy city of our God; where they meet to worship him, and to do him honour. There let them all join with me, to bless and praise the great Creator and Preserver of all things.

PSALM CXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm (like the hundred and tenth) seems to be altogether prophetical, of the joy that all the world should conceive at the coming of the Messiah: to give salvation, first to the Jews, and then to all other nations; according to his faithful promise. St. Paul applies the first words of it to this business, (Rom. xv. 11.) and some of the Hebrews justify his application; confessing that this Psalm belongs to that matter. The brevity of it makes it the more remarkable; and easier to be remembered both by Jews and gentiles.

Ver. 1. O *PRAISE the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.*] Let not the praises, which are due to the great Lord of all, be confined to our nation; but let all people upon the face of the earth praise him: let all mankind sing thankful hymns unto him.

Ver. 2. *For his merciful kindness is great towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.*] For they are all concerned in his transcendent kindness, which hath done mighty things for us; and the Lord, who changes not, will never fail to perform his faithful promises to the world's end. Therefore let us all join our praises to our common Benefactor.

PSALM CXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

There is nothing more probable than that David composed this Psalm, after God had settled him upon the throne of Israel as well as Judah; and also subdued the Philistines, (who hoped to have crushed him before he grew too powerful, 2 Sam. v. 17.) together with other enemies round about him, who, though they are not mentioned, yet, in all likelihood, joined with them, as we may gather from ver. 10, 11, of this Psalm, compared with 2 Sam. vii. 1. For that it was written after he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, (mentioned there, chap. vi.) and placed it in the house he had prepared for it, seems very plain from ver. 19. of this Psalm; where he begins to praise God in such words, as had not their complete fulfilling till the Lord's Christ (whom the Jews rejected, and said, He shall not reign over us) was made king of the world. For to him R. Solomon himself acknowledges those words, *The Stone which the builders refused*, &c. are to be applied.

And as the latter part of the Psalm is a prophecy of Christ, in David's type, so the former part may be accommodated to all Christians: who, being persecuted (as Theodoret speaks), and tormented, and disgracefully treated, by many princes and their people, by kings and governors, got a glorious victory over them all, after they had endured a thousand deaths.

It seems also to have been pronounced, at first, in some solemn assembly of all the people, met together to praise the Lord for his benefits. And it is the common opinion of most interpreters, that they all had a part in this Psalm. The greatest part of which was spoken by David; who begins with a declaration how much he was indebted to God, desiring all to assist him in his praises: and then coming in a solemn procession, I suppose to the gates of the tabernacle, calls upon the porters (ver. 19.) to open them to him, that he might praise God in his sanctuary, which he doth in the very entrance, (ver. 20.) and then in the courts of his house; (ver. 21.) after which all the people shout, and magnify the Divine goodness; in making him, who was banished from his country, their king: (ver. 22, &c.) and then the priests come forth, and bless both the king and people in the name of the Lord, (ver. 26.) and exhort them to be thankful: (ver. 27.) and then David seems to take the words out of their mouths, and to declare that he will never be unmindful of God's benefits; desiring all the people also to remember them, (ver. 28, 29.) According to which account of the Psalm I have ordered the Paraphrase.

Ver. 1. O *GIVE thanks to the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.*] O make your thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of all the world: who, as he is the author of all good, and hath been exceeding bountiful unto us, so will continue his kindness to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2. *Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let the children of Israel, who have had such long experience of his love, and now see his promises fulfilled;

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let them confess, and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness continues to all generations.

Ver. 3. *Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let the priests and the Levites, whose business it is to attend upon his service, confess now, and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness extends unto all ages.

Ver. 4. *Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] And let all the devout worshippers of the Lord, of whatsoever nation they be, join together with us (for there is one Lord of all, who dispenses various benefits to every one of us), and confess now most thankfully, that there is no end of his kindness.

Ver. 5. *I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.*] You may see an example of it in me, who was in grievous straits and dangers; (1 Sam. xxiii. 26. xxvii. 1.) but then imploring the Divine protection, the Lord not only delivered me, but placed me in a secure estate, free from all such molestation, (2 Sam. v. 3. vii. 1.)

Ver. 6. *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*] For the Lord, it is evident, takes my part; and therefore, though I have many enemies, I am not afraid of them: for, when he is for me, what disturbance can men, be they never so powerful, give me?

Ver. 7. *The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*] It is sufficient that the Lord, who hath done great things for me by weak instruments, is still aiding me: therefore I dare look the most malicious enemies in the face, and doubt not to see them turn their backs upon me, (2 Sam. viii.)

Ver. 8. *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.*] This is my hope; and long experience hath taught me, that it is much safer to rely upon him, than upon the most numerous armies:

Ver. 9. *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.*] Far more safe to depend upon his help and protection (who, as he can do what he pleases, and is constant to his word, so never dies), than to confide in the aid of the greatest princes; whose mind may change, or their forces fail, or they themselves, on a sudden, leave the world.

Ver. 10. *All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.*] All the neighbouring nations round about (1 Sam. v. 17, &c. vii. 1.) combined with the Philistines to environ me; but, by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident that I should hew them in pieces.

Ver. 11. *They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.*] Again they made a new invasion, and beset me with stronger forces, (2 Sam. v. 22, &c.) but still, by the almighty power of the Lord, I doubted not that I should cut them off, and utterly defeat them.

Ver. 12. *They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.*] Though they were exceeding numerous, swarming about me like angry bees, and flaming with such rage and fury, as if they would presently consume me; yet it was but like the blaze of fire among thorns: for, by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident I should destroy them.

Ver. 13. *Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.*] They pressed me exceeding hard, and, as one man, conspired with all their might to throw me down from the throne, to which I was advanced; but though they shaked it, and it was ready to fall, yet, by the help of the Lord, it was supported.

Ver. 14. *The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.*] To him alone I ascribe my present happiness, saying, with our forefathers in their triumphant song, (Exod. xv. 2.) The Lord hath armed me with invincible strength; he, and he alone, is to be praised, who hath given me a most glorious deliverance.

Ver. 15. *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.*] Which comforts the hearts of all righteous men; whose houses sound with such joyful shouts of praise for my deliverance as these: The mighty power of the Lord hath done most stupendous things.

Ver. 16. *The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.*] He hath made his mighty power to appear to be superior to all other; for not by man, but by that power we have again and again obtained illustrious victories over our enemies, (2 Sam. xix. 9.)

Ver. 17. *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*] From whence I conclude, that I shall not fall into the hands of those that would take away my life; but still prolong it to declare what wonderful works the Lord hath done for me.

Ver. 18. *The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.*] Who hath let my enemies have power to afflict me very sorely, but not to proceed so far as to destroy me.

Ver. 19. *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord.*] No, instead of that, he hath brought me to his own house again, from which I was banished, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) where I will return thanks unto him: and therefore, O ye that minister in the tabernacle, open the gates at which the righteous enter into the courts of the Lord, that I may go in and make him my acknowledgments, for bringing me from a most forlorn condition to a throne.

Ver. 20. *This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.*] This is the gate (which I behold and approach with joy) that leads to the courts of the Lord, at which the righteous shall enter together with me, and hear me say;

Ver. 21. *I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*] I will never cease to praise and acknowledge thy goodness, O Lord, who hast graciously heard my prayer, when I implored thy help, and delivered me out of all my distresses.

Ver. 22. *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*] And let them bear a part with me in this my psalm of praise; saying; He whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) as the builders of a house do a stone unfit to be employed in it, is now become our king; to whom we must all join ourselves, if we hope for safety: in whom we see a figure of that glorious King, who shall hereafter be in like manner refused, (Luke xix. 14. xx. 17.) and then by God exalted to be the Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's happiness, (Acts iv. 11, 12.)

Ver. 23. *This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our*

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eyes.] This is the sole work of the Lord (not the effect of human counsels, who opposed and obstructed it), which surprises us with the greatest admiration, to see a despised person become on a sudden so renowned.

Ver. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*] This is the happy day which the Lord himself hath made illustrious by his marvellous work; and which it becomes us to celebrate with joyful hearts, and with all outward expressions of gladness, for so great a benefit:

Ver. 25. *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*] Most humbly beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve our king; and to advance and perpetuate his kingdom, (especially the kingdom of Christ, which shall be welcomed into the world with these words, Matt. xxi. 9, &c.) It begins most gloriously; be pleased now, O Lord, to give it answerable success and prosperity.

Ver. 26. *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.*] Which acclamations of the people, let the priests of the Lord meet with their approbation, saying: Blessed be the king which is set over us by the Divine appointment; and blessed be all the people who live under his happy government: we, whose office it is to minister to the Lord, give you his blessing from the holy place, into which you are come to worship him.

Ver. 27. *God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*] Who is the omnipotent Lord, most faithful to his promise; who hath put an end to our troubles, and made peace among us: O be not ungrateful to him, but solemnize this day with festival joys; bind your sacrifices with cords, and bring them to the corners of the altar, to be offered as testimonies of your love and thankfulness unto him.

Ver. 28. *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*] And so for my part, I am resolved; who must own thee to be my most gracious God, and almighty Deliverer; to whom therefore I will make continually my most thankful acknowledgments: to thy almighty goodness alone I owe this greatness to which I am promoted, and therefore I will never cease to speak the highest things I am able in thy praise.

Ver. 29. *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And let all good men join together with me, and make their thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of the world; who, as he is the author of all good, and hath been exceeding bountiful unto us; so will continue his kindness unto all succeeding generations.

PSALM CXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is contrived so artificially, that one would think, at first sight, it was made after the foregoing; when God had subdued the rest of David's enemies, (2 Sam. viii. 10.) and given him leisure for such curious composures. For it is divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, each part containing eight verses, and every one of those verses beginning with that letter wherewith that part begins. The verses, for instance, of the first part, all begin with *alpha*, or A; and all of the second with *beth*, or B, &c. And thence this Psalm is called in the Masora, *The great Alphabet;* which is an indication that David was now in a very sedate condition, under no extraordinary motions, when he penned this Psalm; but quietly considered things as they were represented to his remembrance.

But when we observe how frequently he mentions his affliction, as lying actually upon him, now when he wrote these meditations, it forces us to conclude that it was penned during Saul's persecution: in which there were, I suppose, some quiet intervals; (see ver. 54.) either between the time that Saul (having his life given him by David) resolved to persecute him no more, (1 Sam. xxiv.) and his renewed attempts to destroy him, upon the information the Ziphites again gave him: (1 Sam. xxvi.) or after David's fresh demonstration of his loyalty to him, before he went to Gath: or while he was in that city, where he had liberty to meditate on the excellence of God's laws, and the happiness of those that kept them, and the comfort they were to him in his affliction; which he found to be so sweet and so great, that he begs of God little else, but that he might be more and more in love with them; which were already so much his delight, that he mentions them under one name or other in every verse of this Psalm, none excepted but one, (ver. 122.) or two at the most; (ver. 90.) where he celebrating God's *faithfulness,* which relates to the steadfastness of his *promise* (called in this Psalm his *word*), it may well be thought to be no exception to that observation.

I shall not be so curious as to examine the nice difference which is made by some, between *laws, statutes, testimonies, judgments, precepts,* &c. because they seem here to be used promiscuously; or if there be any peculiar meaning in some verses, I shall endeavour to express it plainly in the Paraphrase.

Theodoret hath a conjecture concerning David's design in this Psalm, (both in his preface to it, and upon ver. 157.) which I shall mention, that the reader may take his choice. David, it is well known, had great varieties in his condition, for he both fled from enemies, and chased them; lived sometimes very melancholy, and again most pleasantly; ran into God's ways, and stumbled, and rose again to run that good course. Now all these things, saith he (and it is not improbable), David afterward collected into this one Psalm; "connecting all the prayers which he had made to God at several times, and on several occasions, and putting them together in this admirable meditation, divided into twenty-two parts, which propound one and the same most profitable lesson to all men; and teach them how it is possible to live virtuously in the worst condition. Nor doth he neglect dogmatical instruction (as he speaks); but adds it to the other: so that this Psalm is sufficient to perfect those that study exquisite virtue, and to stir up the diligence of those that are lazy; to comfort those that are sad; to correct the negligent; and, in one word, to afford all manner of medicines for the cure of the various diseases of mankind." And, if it would not have made this book too big, I should have taken the pains to shew the design of every part in an argument before it.

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ALEPH. PART I.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.*] Happy, more happy than can be expressed, are those men, who do not take the liberty to live as they list; but, making the law of the Lord their rule, order their life in an exact conformity therewith.

Ver. 2. *Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with their whole heart.*] The stricter they keep to that rule (wherein he hath testified his will unto us), most heartily studying to please him, entirely devoting themselves to seek his favour in this way alone, the happier still they are.

Ver. 3. *They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.*] Especially when they will not be tempted to do an evil action, though it were to gain the greatest good in this world; but constantly adhere to him in the way which he hath prescribed them.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.*] We are infinitely beholden to thee, therefore, O Lord, that thou hast obliged us to be so happy, by requiring us to use our utmost diligence to observe thy precepts (which we ourselves know to be good for us) with all care and exactness.

Ver. 5. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.*] O that I may ever be one of those happy men! I have no greater wish than this; that all the actions of my life may be ordered and governed according to thy will.

Ver. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.*] Then shall I never be disappointed of my hopes, nor blush at the crimes which are laid to my charge; when my own conscience tells me, that there is not one of thy commandments but is ever before my eyes, as the rule of my actions:

Ver. 7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*] And is so dear unto me, that nothing can give me such a joy as to have learnt effectually how just and how good they all are; for which I will most sincerely thank thee, as the greatest benefit.

Ver. 8. *I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.*] Deal with me according to the uprightness of my heart in this resolution; that I will observe even those statutes, for which I see no other reason but only thy will. O do not abandon me too far, (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) but stick to me, as I purpose to do to thy statutes.

BETH. PART II.

Ver. 9. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*] But how shall a young man, such as I am, (1 Sam. xxvii. 33. 2 Sam. v. 4.) in an age that is prone to evil, be able to do as he resolves? keeping himself so pure in all his ways, that they maintain an exact conformity unto thy word?

Ver. 10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*] First, I implore, with all my soul, thy gracious assistance; beseeching thee to afford me such a measure of it, that for want of those heavenly supplies I may not be drawn aside at any time from thy commandments.

Ver. 11. *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*] Next, I have laid up thy word in my heart, as the most precious treasure; hoping that will be a security to me, and preserve me from offending thee; whose promises are no less comfortable, than thy threatenings are dreadful.

Ver. 12. *Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.*] And I know also, that thou, O Lord, art kind, and dost not envy thy favours to any of us, but wilt for ever be praised for thy bounty towards us; and therefore I expect that thou wilt hear my prayer, and enable me effectually to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*] On which I have so much set my heart, that I have not spared to declare to others the great regard I have to every thing which thou hast pronounced just, or condemned as unrighteous.

Ver. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*] I can safely say, likewise, that I have taken more satisfaction, now that I am poor, in doing that which thou hast testified to be acceptable to thee, than I should in all the wealth of the world, were it heaped on me.

Ver. 15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*] I will ruminate also often on thy precepts (which will be another means, I trust, to preserve me undefiled): and never do any thing, but consider beforehand, how it agrees with the rules which thou hast prescribed me.

Ver. 16. *I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*] The study of thy statutes (see ver. 8.) shall be my delight; and I will not let slip any word of thine, but preserve it in faithful remembrance.

GIMEL. PART III.

Ver. 17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.*] Let these reasons move thee to deal graciously with me, who am devoted to thy service: render to me according to my integrity; and let not my enemies take away my life, which I intend to employ in doing whatsoever thou hast commanded.

Ver. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*] For which end, I beseech thee to illuminate the eyes of my mind, that I may clearly discern the admirable wisdom which discovers itself in thy law.

Ver. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me.*] I am no better than a stranger in the land, wandering from place to place, (1 Sam. xxiii. 13.) and having no possessions: but do not let me want the knowledge of thy will; and then I shall not think myself destitute of an inheritance.

Ver. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.*] For which my soul longs so vehemently, that I am not more broken with the hardships of my banishment, than with my continual labour and earnest application of my mind, to have a full understanding of thy judgments.

Ver. 21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.*] According to which, thou hast already given a severe rebuke to those haughty men, who, without any respect to right or wrong, persecute and abuse thy servant: (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, &c. xxv. 10. 37.) and the curse which thou hast pronounced (Deut. xxvii. 26.)

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shall light on all such men as take the boldness to transgress those bounds which thou hast set them.

Ver. 22. *Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.*] And thereby remove from me that disgrace and shame, unto which they expose me as a traitor to my king and country: for I am not guilty of any such wickedness; but carefully observe thy testimonies, ver. 14. (1 Chron. xii. 17.)

Ver. 23. *Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.*] Though the rulers and principal senators of the kingdom sat in consultation how to ruin me, declaring me guilty of the greatest crimes; the only care of thy servant hath been to study how to behave himself unblameably according to thy statutes.

Ver. 24. *Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellors.*] Of which I have not been weary; but make the study of thy testimonies my recreation; and never took advice of any other counsellors.

DALETH. PART IV.

Ver. 25. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*] Consider, therefore, the forlorn condition wherein I lie, struggling for life, and utterly unable to help myself; and be pleased to revive and raise me out of it, according to thy promise, (1 Sam. xvi. 12.)

Ver. 26. *I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.*] Thou knowest both my manner of life, and all the dangers to which I am exposed; for I have ever laid them before thee, and found thee ready on all occasions to assist and relieve me: and therefore I hope thou wilt not now leave me; but more perfectly instruct me in my duty, as the surest way to safety.

Ver. 27. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.*] Give me such a right understanding, that I may ever be preserved in the way of thy precepts: then shall I escape the snares of my enemies; and my ordinary discourse shall be, what wonderful deliverances thou hast given me.

Ver. 28. *My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.*] Pity my sad condition; and now that my heart sinks under the weight of my affliction, support and strengthen me according to thy promise; that I may never take any undue course for ease and relief.

Ver. 29. *Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me thy law graciously.*] Far be all fraud and falsehood from me, whereby my enemies contrive to undo me: I desire not to learn any of their wicked arts; but only beseech thee to give me grace to observe thy laws constantly.

Ver. 30. *I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.*] That is the way I have resolved upon, to deal truly and sincerely; squaring all my actions according to thy judgments; which I have laid before me as the most equal rule of my life.

Ver. 31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.*] And hitherto I have kept my resolution, and never started from thy testimonies: preserve me, good Lord, that I may not hereafter disgrace myself, by doing any thing contrary to them; nor be disappointed of my hope, by falling into the hands of those that seek my ruin.

Ver. 32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*] And when thou shalt have filled my heart with joy, by freeing me from those grievous straits, I will do thee better service; and be more forward cheerfully to execute all thy commandments.

HE. PART V.

Ver. 33. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.*] Instruct me, therefore, good Lord, more and more in the right way of serving thee; and I will shew myself most thankful for it, by keeping exactly to it all the days of my life.

Ver. 34. *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*] Illuminate my mind to understand the excellence of thy law: and then I shall not only observe it, but set myself to do it with a watchful, impartial, and most affectionate, diligence.

Ver. 35. *Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.*] Be thou my leader and guide, that I may not stray from the path of thy commandments, wherein I find the greatest satisfaction.

Ver. 36. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*] Incline my heart always to seek its contentment in thy testimonies: and suffer it not to be drawn away by the desire of worldly goods, which, having no measure, is never satisfied.

Ver. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.*] Help me to overlook those empty honours and fading beauties which we are apt to behold with too much admiration, and with lively affections and vigorous endeavours, to persist in the pursuit of thy favour, in the way thou hast set before me.

Ver. 38. *Establish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*] And at last make good thy promise to thy servant, (2 Sam. v. 2.) who fears to do any thing to offend thee, though thereby he might win a crown.

Ver. 39. *Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.*] Turn from me that disgrace, of which I cannot but be sometime afraid, (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) and must certainly suffer, if I fall into my enemies' hands; for thou wilt proceed, I know, according to thy own judgments; which are all equitable, merciful, and gracious.

Ver. 40. *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness.*] I appeal to thee, whether I have not a great zeal for thy precepts; unto which I desire above all things to be conformed: let me not perish therefore in these troubles; but in much mercy revive me, according to thy faithful promise.

VAU. PART VI.

Ver. 41. *Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord; even thy salvation, according to thy word.*] To those infinite mercies of thine, which moved thee to make me such gracious promises, I betake myself: and beseech thee to let me feel the happy effects of both in my deliverance.

Ver. 42. *So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.*] So shall I be able to put to silence those that reproach me for my confidence in thee: which they call a vain presumption; but is an humble reliance on thy own gracious promises to me.

Ver. 43. *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.*] Which till

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thou art pleased to fulfil, do not so far abandon me, as to let me be disheartened in asserting their truth and faithfulness (which I am wont to oppose to all the threats of my enemies): for my whole dependance is on this, that thou wilt not fail me; but pronounce a righteous sentence for me.

Ver. 44. *So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.*] And I for my part promise, when thou shalt be so gracious to me, not to suffer myself to grow more negligent in thy service: but to be more careful than ever in the observance of thy laws, to the very end of my days.

Ver. 45. *And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.*] For then I shall have no such encumbrances on me, as I now have in these straits and difficulties; from which when thou freest me, I will do my duty with the greater cheerfulness and joy: for it is not liberty, no, nor a kingdom, that I seek, so much as better advantages to fulfil thy precepts.

Ver. 46. *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*] Which I will not be ashamed to justify before the greatest persons in the world, to be the most excellent rule of life, and the best testimony of thy love to us: and will do it with such reasons, that they shall never be able to disprove me.

Ver. 47. *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.*] Nor will I confute myself, by leading a voluptuous life; when I have liberty to do as I list: but as I have hitherto preferred thy commandments before all other things, so then will I take the highest pleasure in them:

Ver. 48. *My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.*] Not only in their study; but shew the truth of my love to them, by a diligent and zealous practice of them: which shall be the end of my meditation in them.

ZAIN. PART VII.

Ver. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*] Be pleased therefore, in due time, to perform the promise, which thou hast long ago made to thy servant, (2 Sam. v. 2.) and when I thought of no such thing, given me an assured hope of it, (1 Sam. xvi. 11—13.)

Ver. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.*] Which as it hath been the occasion of many and great troubles to me, so hath comforted me under them all: and, even when I despaired of safety, revived my spirit, and restored my courage to life again.

Ver. 51. *The proud have had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law.*] Though my insulting enemies mocked exceedingly at my hope, and, in the pride of their hearts, attempted by the most unjust means to destroy me; it never moved me to imitate them, by taking any unlawful method for my preservation.

Ver. 52. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself.*] But I called to mind, O Lord, how, in all foregoing ages, thou hast suffered good men to fall into great calamities; thereby to render them, at last, the more illustrious: and with this consideration also I comforted myself.

Ver. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.*] I have been seized, indeed, sometime with a horrible fear, when I thought what sort of men were my persecutors: who stuck at nothing which would serve their ends; having no regard to right or wrong;

Ver. 54. *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*] Yet in all my wanderings up and down, (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2. 5. xxiii. 13.) I never tarried long in any place, but I passed the time delightfully, in composing some such song as this in praise of thy statutes.

Ver. 55. *I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law.*] When others were asleep, I was calling to mind how good, how powerful, and how faithful, thou art: and resolving with myself still to observe thy laws.

Ver. 56. *This I had, because I kept thy precepts.*] Which make those so happy that obey them, that I ascribe this sweet composure of mind, and cheerfulness of spirit, under all my grievous afflictions, to my strict observance of them.

CHETH. PART VIII.

Ver. 57. *Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words.*] I have no possessions in this world, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) which I see others greedily sharing among them: but I do not think myself poor, as long as I have an interest in thy love, and in thy promises, O Lord; whose words I have resolved to keep as the greatest treasure.

Ver. 58. *I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.*] For there is nothing comparable to thy favour; which I have besought with the heartiest affection, and the most importunate prayers: and do again beseech thee to deal mercifully with me, according to thy repeated promises unto me.

Ver. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*] For upon serious deliberation what course of life it was best to take, I rejected all other, which with specious shows of worldly advantages would have seduced me, and determined to be guided wholly by thy testimonies.

Ver. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*] And being thus resolved, I admitted no farther debate about it; but instantly, without any delay, set myself to the strict observance of thy commandments.

Ver. 61. *The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.*] Nor hath any thing been able to remove me from this resolution; but though I have been beset with troops of wicked men, who stripped me of all I had, (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) it did not make me forget my duty; nor put me upon any unlawful means of being revenged of them, (xxiv. 6, 7.)

Ver. 62. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*] But have blessed thee both night and day, and arose at midnight to give thee thanks for those just and good laws, which thou hast taught me to observe.

Ver. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*] Associating myself willingly with none but such as fear to offend thee, and do religiously observe thy precepts: who are all truly dear unto me.

Ver. 64. *The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach*

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me thy statutes.] And no other thing do I desire of thee, O Lord, whose kindness is so great that it dispenses its blessing plentifully throughout all the earth, but that thou wilt instruct me still to serve thee as I ought.

TETH. PART IX.

Ver. 65. *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word.*] Many other benefits, I will thankfully acknowledge, O Lord, thou hast bestowed upon thy servant: with whom thou hast faithfully kept thy word.

Ver. 66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.*] And I am not ignorant of thy commandments, which, by thy grace, I have believed to be the only way to happiness: but still I need thy farther assistance, to give me a delightful taste and thorough sense of what I know; which I beseech thee add to the rest of the benefits I have received from thee.

Ver. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.*] And if it be necessary for this end, to deprive me still of all other delights, I submit unto it: for I must confess I committed many errors before I was thus afflicted; which since I have corrected, and grown more strictly observant of thy word.

Ver. 68. *Thou art good, and doest good: teach me thy statutes.*] Thou art in thy own nature kind and good; and nothing else can proceed from thee, who designest our good even when thou afflictest us: take what methods thou pleasest with me; only teach me effectually to do as thou wouldest have me.

Ver. 69. *The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.*] They that disdain to be tied to the common and plain rules of honesty, have taken a great deal of pains to invent a lie against me: (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) but as I am hitherto conscious of no such guilt, so I will always confute them by an impartial and most hearty observance of thy precepts.

Ver. 70. *Their heart is as fat as grease: but I delight in thy law.*] Which gives me infinitely greater satisfaction in a poor starved condition, than all the dull delights of sense, which they enjoy, in the fullest plenty of worldly prosperity.

Ver. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*] This they stupidly imagine is the only happiness; but I can truly say, it was more happy for me that I was afflicted: for thereby I learnt to apply myself more seriously to thy statutes.

Ver. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*] Whereby thy will is declared unto us by a voice from heaven, (Exod. xx. 1.) which I prefer before all the gold and silver in the kingdom.

JOD. PART X.

Ver. 73. *Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.*] Desert me not then, who am thine own workmanship; that neither hath nor hopeth for any thing but from thy almighty power: and desires above all things to comprehend fully what thy will is, that he may obey it.

Ver. 74. *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.*] It will be a very great comfort and encouragement to all good men, when they see me delivered out of all these troubles: for thereby they will be confirmed in their belief of thy faithfulness to thy promises; on which it will appear I have not vainly depended, though I stayed long for the performance.

Ver. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*] And I am satisfied, O Lord, that while thou makest me wait for the performance, thou doest nothing contrary to thy justice, or to thy fidelity: but that all these cross dispensations of thy providence, in the heavy afflictions which have befallen me, are perfectly righteous: and will only make thy truth and faithfulness, at last, the more illustrious.

Ver. 76. *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.*] O hasten that happy time; when I shall see thy loving-kindness turning this disconsolate into a more comfortable condition: according to the promises which thou hast made unto thy servant, (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13.)

Ver. 77. *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*] Let me feel the speedy effects of thy compassionate mercy; rescuing me from those that seek my life, and raising me out of this forlorn estate, (1 Sam. xxiv. 14.) For howsoever I am represented, my highest satisfaction is in obedience to thy law.

Ver. 78. *Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.*] Confound all those proud contemners of it, who, making no conscience of what they say, have oppressed and overthrown me with lies and calumnies; as if I studied to disturb the kingdom, when my only study is to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 79. *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.*] Let all pious men, who have a due regard to thy testimonies, be convinced of this; and be no longer abused by these slanders; but turn to my side, and become my friends.

Ver. 80. *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.*] And in order to it preserve me so blameless before thee, in such integrity of heart as well as life, that I may not be ashamed of the hope I have, that thou and all good men will take my part.

CAPH. PART XI.

Ver. 81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope in thy word.*] For which blessing I have now attended so many years, that I am ready sometime to faint away with vehement desire to see thy long-expected promise fulfilled, of deliverance from all my enemies.

Ver. 82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?*] That joyful sight I have looked for, till I am in danger to be weary with expectation; saying, When will the time come of my deliverance from this disconsolate condition?

Ver. 83. *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget thy statutes.*] I hope it will not be long delayed; for I am worn away, and my skin (like an empty leathern bag, that hath hung a great while in the smoke) is shrivelled up with toil and grief; and yet I have never taken any unlawful course to rid myself of all this misery.

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Ver. 84. *How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?*] I leave that to thee, O Lord; beseeching thee to consider how my days spend apace in trouble and sorrow: which force me to sigh and say, How long must thy poor servant still lie in this calamitous condition? O when wilt thou do me right against my persecutors?

Ver. 85. *The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.*] Who proudly contrive by all manner of frauds and treachery to take away my life, directly contrary to thy law; to which they are as injurious as unto me.

Ver. 86. *All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*] For all thy commandments teach us to be just and true; being as faithful, as those men are false and perfidious: therefore make good thy promises to me; and deliver me from those who persecute me with lies and forgeries.

Ver. 87. *They had almost consumed me upon earth: but I forsook not thy precepts.*] Which they have employed so successfully, that I escaped very hardly with my life, when I was in the land of Judah; (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) and yet, for all this, I stuck to thy precepts; and would not take away the life of him that sought mine, when I could have easily done it, (xxiv. 6, 7.)

Ver. 88. *Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.*] Deal as kindly with me, O Lord; and not only spare my life, but raise me out of this forlorn estate, wherein I lie, like a man that is dead; (1 Sam. xxiv. 14.) and I will endeavour the more carefully to observe the testimonies which thou hast solemnly (ver. 72.) given us in charge.

LAMED. PART XII.

Ver. 89. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.*] Thou art eternal, O Lord, and changest not; and thy promises are like thyself, fixed and settled in the heavens; which are a lively emblem of their constancy, and unvariable truth.

Ver. 90. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.*] One generation goes, and another comes; but thy fidelity is still the same to all: and alters no more than the earth; which thou hast firmly and immoveably established, while all those creatures that live upon it pass away and perish.

Ver. 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.*] All things remain to this day in the order at first appointed; and never vary from the laws which thou hast set them: for they are entirely subject to thy will and pleasure.

Ver. 92. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*] Which was a most comfortable meditation in my afflicted condition: when my heart would have failed me, and I should have been undone; if thy laws (which stand as fast as heaven and earth) had not given me constant consolation.

Ver. 93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.*] I will never, therefore, be guilty of neglecting thy precepts: which have revived me (by thy faithful promises thou hast annexed to the observance of them), when I looked upon myself as a dead man, that could not escape the hands of those that sought to destroy me.

Ver. 94. *I am thine, save me: for I have sought thy precepts.*] And be thou pleased still to deliver me from falling into their hands: for though they have driven me from thy inheritance, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) I still continue thine, and serve no other God; but have diligently inquired, in my greatest dangers, what would be most pleasing to thee, as most advantageous to myself.

Ver. 95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies.*] Those wicked men, who are combined to destroy me, have long watched for an opportunity which they confidently expect to meet withal: but it doth not discourage my study of thy testimonies, as the best defence against their bloody attempts.

Ver. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*] For had I greater forces than my enemies, alas! I never yet saw any thing so complete, but, as it had its bounds and limits, so it is exceeding frail; and when it is arrived at perfection, comes to a speedy end; whereas the wisdom which thou hast revealed to us hath infinite satisfaction in it, durable and lasting satisfaction; which never fails those that depend upon it.

MEM. PART XIII.

Ver. 97. *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*] It is impossible to express the love I have to thy law: which entertains my meditation, or enables me to entertain others, with admirable variety, whole days together.

Ver. 98. *Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.*] Mine enemies are very crafty, and use many artifices to destroy me: but, by observing thy commandments, I have defeated all their subtle devices, and confounded them, even by refusing (because thy commandments, which are ever before my eyes, restrain me), to be avenged on them, (1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 18, &c. xxvi. 21.)

Ver. 99. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.*] I have outstripped all the doctors of the law, of whom I formerly learnt; and understand more perfectly than they, the best means of securing myself: because my mind is still employed in thy testimonies, as the rule of all my designs and undertakings.

Ver. 100. *I understand more than the ancients; because I keep thy precepts.*] Though I am but young, yet have I more understanding in things, than the judges and grave privy-councillors; because my maxim is, strictly to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*] Whatsoever advantage it promised me, I have never proceeded in any evil course to obtain my end: but refused the seeming gain; that I might not offend against thy word.

Ver. 102. *I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.*] My respect to thee hath hindered me from doing any injury unto others: because I know thou art the author of those laws which forbid it; and in the observance of them, I have learnt, consists my happiness.

Ver. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*] And a happiness it is, I feel already, incomparably above all other: the pleasure

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I take in every word of thine, is inexpressibly far to be preferred before all the delights of sense, though never so sweet and luscious.

Ver. 104. *Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*] And by thy precepts I am so fully instructed how to behave myself, that I need not to betake myself to any dishonest ways, which I utterly abhor.

NUN. PART XIV.

Ver. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*] Thy word is my only guide; whose directions I follow in all the dark and difficult passages of my life.

Ver. 106. *I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*] I have solemnly resolved, and bound myself by the most sacred ties, which I will never break, but do now confirm, that I will carefully observe thy decrees, which I find to be both just and good.

Ver. 107. *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word.*] I have suffered very much upon that account, and am still sorely afflicted; but I comfort myself, O Lord, with thy promise, according to which I beseech thee to deliver me from those that seek to destroy me; and raise me out of this forlorn condition, wherein I can scarce be said to live.

Ver. 108. *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will-offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments.*] I have no other sacrifices that I am able in this exile to offer to thee, but these of prayer, and thankful acknowledgments, and vows of sincere and cheerful obedience; with which I do most freely and heartily present thee, O Lord: beseeching thee to teach me still more effectually thy judgments; that I may never fail to be conformed to thy will.

Ver. 109. *My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.*] To which I have hitherto so closely adhered, that though I go in continual danger of my life, (Judg. xii. 3.) it doth not move me in the least (whatsoever shifts I am forced to make) to save myself by forsaking thy law.

Ver. 110. *The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.*] They that make no conscience of their actions, have contrived a subtle plot to ruin me; but I have never stepped out of the way of thy precepts, to avoid the snares they have laid for me.

Ver. 111. *Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*] I had rather always continue as poor as I am, than do any thing against thy testimonies; which I hold to be my chiefest good and surest possession: out of which none can expel me; and which always yield me that inward satisfaction and joy which none can take from me.

Ver. 112. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.*] This infinitely outweighs all other considerations; and hath inclined my heart to resolve to do always as thou biddest me (whatsoever I may lose by it), to the very end of my days.

SAMECH. PART XV.

Ver. 113. *I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.*] I hate all double-dealing, and crafty devices, that are not warranted by thy law: to which I have resolved to stick with hearty affection.

Ver. 114. *Thou art my hiding-place and my shield: I hope in thy word.*] In that way I will trust to thee for safety and protection: having a firm hope that thou wilt be as good unto me as thy word.

Ver. 115. *Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*] Do not persuade me any longer, O ye evil-doers, to join with you; but get you gone from me: for I will follow none of your counsels; but strictly observe the commandments of my God, who hath hitherto most graciously delivered me.

Ver. 116. *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.*] And on whom I still depend, that thou wilt support me, O Lord, according to thy promise, against all the assaults of my enemies that seek my life: and not let me be ashamed of the hope and expectation I have, that thou wilt defend and deliver me.

Ver. 117. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.*] Be thou my support in this weak condition, I humbly again beseech thee: and then they shall not be able to throw me down; but in safety and security I shall make thy statutes my perpetual study.

Ver. 118. *Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.*] They shall fall to the ground, and not I; for thou art wont, I observe, to abase and lay as low as the mire in the streets all those that presume to go out of the plain way of thy statutes; for all their crafty tricks and crooked arts, on which they rely, at last prove false unto them and deceive them.

Ver. 119. *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.*] Thou castest all such wicked men out of the land like dross, that is good for nothing, which makes me addict myself, with the greater love, unto thy testimonies.

Ver. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.*] Trembling all over with fear lest I should by any disobedience to thee incur thy severe displeasure; and dreading above all things thy judgments: which are threatened in the law, and which I see executed upon the contemners of it.

AIN. PART XVI.

Ver. 121. *I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.*] This pious fear laid such a restraint upon me, that I never did any wrong to them, nor so much as dealt hardly with them, that now injure me: therefore suffer me not to fall into the hands of those who oppress me with their calumnies.

Ver. 122. *Be surety to thy servant for good; let not the proud oppress me.*] Their pride is great, and, having power equal to their malice, they hope to prevail over me; but do thou graciously undertake my protection, and be my security against the mischief they design me; that instead of being my ruin, their calumnies may turn to my greater good and advantage.

Ver. 123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.*] I believe they will; but I have

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looked so long for that happy time, when thou wilt deliver me (and yet am still in apparent danger to fall into the hands of my enemies), that I am almost tired with expectanco of thy promise; though I know it is faithful and true, and shall certainly be performed.

Ver. 124. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.*] Pity my infirmity, and in much mercy send speedy relief unto thy servant; and in the mean time instruct me more perfectly in thy statutes; that I may make the better use of that deliverance.

Ver. 125. *I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*] I am devoted to thy service, and designed by thee to a high employment: enlighten my understanding therefore, that I may fully know my duty.

Ver. 126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law.*] For now is the time to do all I can for the Lord (who may be pleased then to take this opportunity to perform his promise), when wicked men not only transgress, but are so profane that they reject, and would wholly lay aside, thy law.

Ver. 127. *Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.*] This inflames my zeal, and heightens my love to thy commandments, which I value far more than all the riches in the world; which shall not tempt me to violate one of them, or suffer them, if I can help it, to be contemned by others.

Ver. 128. *Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.*] For the more I consider them, the more I approve every one of them (as the exactest and best rule whereby I square all my actions), and abhor all those base and dishonest ways whereby others study to advance themselves to riches and honours.

PE. PART XVII.

Ver. 129. *Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.*] I cannot sufficiently admire and extol the excellent wisdom also of thy laws, whereby thou hast testified thy will unto us; which makes me the more careful faithfully to observe them.

Ver. 130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple.*] When a man doth but begin to be acquainted with thy word, he finds his mind marvellously enlightened with such clear and useful knowledge, as directs the most simple people how to live happy.

Ver. 131. *I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.*] Which hath excited me to the most eager pursuit of this most excellent wisdom; for I longed to have a perfect understanding of thy commandments, which at first sight afford such abundant satisfaction.

Ver. 132. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou used to do unto those that love thy name.*] Favour my desires, I most humbly beseech thee; and vouchsafe me the same grace which thou art wont to bestow on those that sincerely love thee, and study, as I do, thy honour and glory.

Ver. 133. *Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*] And first of all enable me to walk steadily, according to the rule of thy word, that I may not be a slave to any sin whatsoever.

Ver. 134. *Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.*] And then deliver me from the oppression of him (1 Sam. xxvi. 24.) who unjustly seeks to destroy me; that I may have the greater liberty to study and observe thy precepts.

Ver. 135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.*] Put an end to the troubles of thy servant, who is devoted to thy obedience; and for this reason, above all others, desires to see better days, that he may have better opportunities to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*] Which it is a very great grief to me, to behold so universally neglected; and hath cost me many a tear, when I consider, not merely the persecution which I suffer, but how thereby my enemies violate thy law.

TZADDI. PART XVIII.

Ver. 137. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.*] I leave it to thee, O Lord, to redress these evils; who art both just and good, and governest all things with an unerring equity.

Ver. 138. *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.*] For as all the laws thou hast given us are perfectly righteous; so thou dost exactly and most faithfully fulfil all the promises or threatenings which thou hast made to the observers, or against the breakers, of them.

Ver. 139. *My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.*] The consideration of which moves my indignation to such a degree, that I am tormented to see my enemies so forgetful of their own interest, as not to regard thy words.

Ver. 140. *Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*] Which I know to be infallibly true, and perfectly free from all falsehood and deceit: which is the reason of that ardent affection thy servant hath unto them.

Ver. 141. *I am small and despised; yet do not I forget thy precepts.*] Which will not suffer me, though I am mean and contemptible in the eyes of my enemies (who are honourable and mighty), to be guilty of neglecting any of thy precepts.

Ver. 142. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.*] For still I think with myself, that thy justice, goodness, and fidelity, are unchangeable; and whatsoever thou hast said in thy law is the very truth; upon which we may certainly depend, and never be deceived.

Ver. 143. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; yet thy commandments are my delights.*] And therefore, though I am unexpectedly (1 Sam. xx. 3.) involved in very sore straits and difficulties, yet I do not forsake, but find great consolation in the study of thy commandments.

Ver. 144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.*] Especially in this consideration, (which comes often into my mind, ver. 142.) that all the declarations thou hast made of thy will to us are so just and true, that they will never fail our expectation: O give me wisdom to order my life according to them! and then it shall not be in the power of my enemies to make me miserable.

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KOPH. PART XIX.

Ver. 145. *I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes.*] I have besought thy favour in this sorrowful and distressed condition, with most vehement cries and hearty affection: be pleased to rescue me out of it, O Lord, and I promise with the greater care to observe thy statutes.

Ver. 146. *I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.*] I have made it my constant business to cry unto thee for help; from whom alone I seek it: deliver me, I again beseech thee, and I will not fail to make good my promise of observing thy testimonies.

Ver. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.*] I have sent up early cries unto thee, before the morning-light appeared: constantly expecting the performance of thy promise to me.

Ver. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.*] Nor have I been less forward in the study of my duty, than in the imploring of thy mercy; but have awaked before all the watches were set, to meditate in thy word.

Ver. 149. *Hear my voice, according unto thy loving-kindness: O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment.*] Let my prayer prevail with thee, O Lord, for that favour and kindness which I have oft experienced; and preserve my life, as thou hast done hitherto, by such means as thou judgest best for me.

Ver. 150. *They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.*] I am closely beset, thou seest, and in danger to be seized (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) by those who, as they persecute me, and seek my ruin, so care not by what wicked arts they compass their design: for they have no regard at all to thy law.

Ver. 151. *Thou art near, O Lord: and all thy commandments are truth.*] My only comfort is, that they cannot approach so near to hurt me, as thou, O Lord, art to defend and preserve me: and that all thy promises annexed to thy commandments (still I think of that, ver. 142.) shall faithfully be fulfilled.

Ver. 152. *Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.*] This hath ever been my support, long before I fell into these troubles; that whatsoever thou hast testified to be thy will and pleasure, is firm and steadfast, and shall never fail those that depend upon it, (ver. 144.)

RESH. PART XX.

Ver. 153. *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me; for I do not forget thy law.*] Shew then that thou dost not neglect me; but art as mindful of me, as I am of thy law in this afflicted condition, out of which I beseech thee to deliver me; for none of the evils that have befallen me have made me forget my duty to thee.

Ver. 154. *Plead thou my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.*] I appeal to thee, whether I have not a righteous cause; beseeching thee to do me justice upon mine enemies, (1 Sam. xxiv. 15.) and rescue me from their persecutions: for I am in great danger of perishing, but depend upon thy promise for my safety.

Ver. 155. *Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.*] Far be it from thee to afford any help to the wicked: for they have no regard to thy statutes; but seek only how they may satisfy their own lewd and cruel desires.

Ver. 156. *Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments.*] To which I oppose the bowels of thy compassion, O Lord, whose tender mercies are many and great: and will preserve my life, I hope, according to thy wonted care over me, and kindness to me, (ver. 149.)

Ver. 157. *Many are my persecutors, and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.*] I am not discouraged, either by the number or the strength (which are both very great) of those that persecute me with a deadly enmity: which doth not move me in the least to depart from thy testimonies, (Lev. xix. 18.) by seeking their destruction as they do mine, (1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.)

Ver. 158. *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.*] It only provokes my sorrow, to see that there is no faith, nor truth, nor gratitude, in them, (1 Sam. xxiv. 17, &c. xxvi. 2.) and troubles me beyond measure, that they have no regard to what thou commandest or forbiddest.

Ver. 159. *Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness.*] Such is the love I have to thy precepts; which, I beseech thee, let the world see thou dost observe: and both preserve my life, O Lord, and, according to the exceeding greatness of thy goodness, deliver me out of this sad condition.

Ver. 160. *Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*] As I doubt not thou wilt; for none of thy promises have ever failed: but the very first of them, which thou madest to our forefather Abraham, (Gen. xii. 2.) hath been faithfully fulfilled; and so shall every thing else, which thou hast resolved and declared to be thy will, be punctually performed to the end of the world.

SCHIN. PART XXI.

Ver. 161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.*] The rulers and prime counsellors of the kingdom persecute me, for pretended crimes; of which as I am not guilty, so I do not fear so much what they can do against me, as lest I should do any thing in my own vindication against thy word, (1 Sam. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 9.)

Ver. 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*] I would not purchase my liberty, my peace, or the honour they enjoy, by any unlawful actions: for I take far more delight in doing thy will, and in what thou hast promised to do for me, than in the completest victory over all my enemies.

Ver. 163. *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.*] I hate all fraud and deceit; even to the degree of abhorrence and abomination: but most heartily love these honest courses to which thy law directs me.

Ver. 164. *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*] It is the subject of my perpetual thanks and praise, that I have the happiness to be acquainted with the justice and goodness of those laws, whereby thou governest us.

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Ver. 165. *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*] The observance of which gives such inward satisfaction, and brings so many and great blessings to those who truly love them, that they take all things which befal them in good part; and nothing will tempt them to turn aside and leave those virtuous paths wherein they lead them.

Ver. 166. *Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.*] I have met with the most grievous discouragements: but, Lord, in the midst of the greatest straits I have expected deliverance only from thee; and never done any thing, for my preservation, contrary to thy commandments.

Ver. 167. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.*] All my care hath been still most heartily to observe thy testimonies: which I prefer infinitely before all earthly enjoyments.

Ver. 168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.*] There is not one of thy laws, of any sort, but I have carefully observed; even then when I might have privily broken them, and been a gainer by it: (1 Sam. xxiv. 4, &c.) for I knew that nothing can be done so secretly but thou art perfectly acquainted with it.

TAU. PART XXII.

Ver. 169. *Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word.*] As thou art also with my most earnest petitions; to which, I beseech thee, O Lord, vouchsafe a gracious answer: and in the first place teach me, according as thou hast promised, to walk, not only innocently, but prudently, in the midst of all the snares that are laid for me.

Ver. 170. *Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.*] Do not deny admittance to this humble suit; but in due time grant this farther request: that I may, according to the same promise, be perfectly delivered from this long persecution.

Ver. 171. *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.*] Then will I praise thee without ceasing; first, for instructing me how to please thee in all things;

Ver. 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.*] And next, for fulfilling thy promise to me: which I will loudly proclaim with my thankful acknowledgments; that whatsoever thou hast said is truly and faithfully performed.

Ver. 173. *Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts.*] Let thy Divine power therefore succour me in this weak and distressed condition wherein I am; for I rely on that alone; having resolved to be guided wholly by thy precepts.

Ver. 174. *I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord; and thy law is my delight.*] And I have long expected, with most ardent desires, thy help, O Lord, for my deliverance: delighting myself, in the mean time, in thy laws; while thou art pleased to delay it.

Ver. 175. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.*] O let me not perish in these straits wherein I am involved; but spare my life, according to thy wonted kindness, and I will spend it in thy praises: send me relief, by executing the judgments thou hast decreed against my enemies.

Ver. 176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*] Who have so chased me from place to place during this tedious banishment; that, like a wandering sheep, which hath lost its way, I know not whither to betake myself for safety: but be thou pleased, like a careful shepherd, to look after me, and to put thy servant into the right way of escaping all the dangers to which I am exposed, and of recovering my liberty, rest, and peace again: for, how hard soever my condition hath been (I can still seriously profess it), I have not been careless in the observance of thy commandments.

PSALM CXX.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

There can no certain account be given, why this and fourteen other Psalms, which follow, are called *Songs of Degrees*, or *Ascents*. Their conjecture seems to me most probable, who think the title denotes, either the *elevation* of the voice in the singing these songs, or the *excellence* of the composure, or of the music to which they were set, or the *high esteem* they had of them upon some account or other; particularly because they were so fit for their use (though most of them composed in former times), at and after their return from the captivity of Babylon. Then, some think, this title was given to them because they sung them as they *went up* to their own country again.

But this present Psalm seems to have been made by David, when the calumnies of Doeg, and others, forced him to flee his country, and to go as far as the Kedarens, or Arabians, (ver. 5.) whose company was very irksome to him. We do not read, indeed, in his history that he was there: but we may well think he sought for safety in more places than are particularly mentioned; and might as well be there, as among the Moabites, and in the wilderness of Paran, (1 Sam. xxv. 1.) which was not far from them. As for Mesech, I take that to signify not a place, but the length of time which he stayed there, before he durst stir from thence; or which he was forced to spend in exile: as all the ancient interpreters, except one, understand it. (See Bochart, in his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 12.)

Ver. 1. *IN my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me.*] I have had frequent experience of the goodness of the Lord; who, when I have earnestly implored his help in my straits and difficulties, hath constantly relieved me.

Ver. 2. *Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*] May it please thee, O Lord, still to continue thy mercy towards me: and now that men strike at my life, by calumnies and cunningly-devised lies, (1 Sam. xxii. 9. xxiv. 9.) to preserve me from the danger into which they have thrown me.

Ver. 3. *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?*] O thou false accuser! what dost thou hope to get by these specious tales which thou hast forged? What will they add to that heap of wealth which thou treasurest up? (Psal. lii. 7.)

Ver. 4. *Sharp arrows of the Almighty, with coals of*

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juniper.] They shall be so far from turning to thy advantage, that they shall prove thy undoing: for the mighty Lord (whom none can resist) shall take a sharp and a swift vengeance on thee; which shall never cease, till it hath utterly consumed thee.

Ver. 5. *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*] For it is but fit thou shouldest smart for the mischief thou hast done, under which I groan most sadly; not only in a tedious banishment from my own country, but in that I am forced to seek for shelter among the barbarous Arabs.

Ver. 6. *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*] Where my mind cannot but perpetually reflect upon the implacable spirit of my enemies: whose bitter hatred will not suffer them to come to any terms of agreement.

Ver. 7. *I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.*] As I never gave them the least offence, so there is nothing that I more vehemently desire than peace and reconciliation; but when I make a motion of it, they are the more exasperated; and, as if I distrusted my cause, or craftily sought advantage by a treaty, betake themselves more fiercely and resolutely to their arms.

PSALM CXXI.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

If David was the author of this Psalm, (and to whom can we with so much likelihood ascribe it?) it is an expression of the high trust and confidence which he reposed in God, when he was in great straits, and saw no hope of human help: being either environed by Saul's forces, or pursued by his son Absalom. It is hard to say to which it belongs; but if by *hills* in the first verse we understand Zion and Moriah, where David's palace and the ark of God were placed; then it must be referred to the latter: for Zion was not theirs, during Saul's persecution.

There are those indeed, who, following Kimchi, take the first verse to be a military form of speech; and suppose David to have looked round about him, as a captain in danger doth, to see if he could spy any assistance coming to him down the neighbouring hills wherewith he was encompassed. But the other sense seems to me more simple; which therefore I have followed: though, if we should adhere to that conjecture, still it will best agree to the distress into which Absalom had reduced him. For then he might well look to see if any of his subjects, continuing their fidelity to him, would appear to defend him. Why called *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *I WILL lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help.*] Though I am driven not only from my own palace, but from God's dwelling-place, (2 Sam. xv. 14. 25.) yet my eyes shall be ever directed thitherward: from whence I expect a powerful aid against those numerous enemies that are combined to destroy me.

Ver. 2. *My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*] I have no dependance on any other help, but wait for deliverance wholly from the presence of the Lord: to whom all creatures are subject, and who hath angels at his command, to send to the succour of his servants; for he made the heaven as well as the earth.

Ver. 3. *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.*] And methinks I hear his ministers calling to me out of his holy place, and saying, Fear not, since thou hast placed thy confidence in the Lord alone, he will not let thee be subverted: thou hast a stronger guard than the most valiant army would be to thee; for they may be tired and fall asleep, but he that hath thee in his custody will exercise a most unwearied care over thee.

Ver. 4. *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*] Be confident of it; he that is the protector of all good men, will never in the least neglect thee; much less abandon the care of thee: but, by a most watchful providence, keep thee in safety.

Ver. 5. *The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.*] The omnipotent Lord of the world is thy guardian: the very same Lord that covered your forefathers with a glorious cloud (Exod. xiii. 21.) is always present with thee, to defend and assist thee against all the enemies that assault thee.

Ver. 6. *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*] Be not troubled that thou art forced to take up thy quarters in the open field: for the sun shall do thee no hurt by its vehement heat in the day, nor the moon by its cold and moisture in the night, (2 Sam. xvii. 1. 6. 22.)

Ver. 7. *The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.*] The Lord shall preserve thee from all manner of harm: he will preserve thy life, and not suffer thee to fall into the hands of those that contrive to take it away, (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2. 14.)

Ver. 8. *The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.*] The Lord shall secure thee whithersoever thou marchest; and prosper thee all along in thy undertakings, either abroad or within doors: not only now, but in all future times, to the end of thy days.

PSALM CXXII.

A Song of Degrees of David.

ARGUMENT.

The title satisfies us that David was the author of this Psalm: who, having settled the ark (which before had no certain place) at Jerusalem, and being at this time, upon some occasion, in the country, heard the good people there speak one to another, as some of them did to him, of going to worship God, at some of the three solemn feasts: which devotion of theirs, as it rejoiced his heart, so it moved him, I conjecture, to compose this Psalm for their use, at such times.

If the Talmudists may be believed, they were wont to sing the first verse of this Psalm as they went out of the country towards Jerusalem, carrying their first-fruits to the house of the Lord; as the law (Deut. xxvi. 2.) directed them: and when they entered within the gates of the city, they sang the second verse. There they were met by some of the citizens, who, if this be true, sang the rest of the Psalm, it is likely, together with them, as they went towards the temple. Of this custom Mr. Selden treats, lib. iii. de Synedr. cap. 13. Of *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

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Ver. 1. *I WAS glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*] I was exceedingly pleased with the cheerful devotion of those who came unto me, before the approaching feast, and said, Let us go and pay our thankful acknowledgments to the Lord in the place where he dwells, and makes himself present among us.

Ver. 2. *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*] Which motion ought to be the more readily embraced, because now he hath fixed his habitation: and we need not travel farther than Jerusalem, to inquire after the ark of his presence.

Ver. 3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*] To Jerusalem, I say, that fair and beautiful city, whose buildings do not now lie scattered and divided: but are all compacted, and united together (as we ought to be) in a goodly order, (1 Sam. v. 9. 1 Chron. xi. 8.)

Ver. 4. *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the estimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*] Thither all the twelve tribes of Israel, who own the great Lord for their God, go up from all the parts of the country, by his special commandment, (Exod. xxiii. 17.) to acknowledge, before the ark of his testimony, (xxv. 21, 22.) all the benefits they have received from his almighty goodness; and this above the rest, that he thereby testifies his singular care and providence over them.

Ver. 5. *For there are set thrones of judgment: the thrones of the house of David.*] Thither also they repair for justice; for the supreme judicatory of the kingdom sits here, (2 Chron. xix. 8.) and there is the seat of the royal family, (where David and his sons have their residence, and govern the people, 2 Sam. viii. 15. 18.)

Ver. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.*] O let this be part of your devout prayers, when you come there; that God would preserve Jerusalem in peace: happy shall they be, who, out of love to the religion and justice which are administered in thee (O beloved city), contribute their endeavours, as well as their prayers, for thy safety and prosperity.

Ver. 7. *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*] Let no enemy (this shall be my constant prayer) approach so much as to thy outworks to disturb thee: and let plenty of all good things abound within thy palaces.

Ver. 8. *For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.*] The kindness I have for my kindred, and my neighbours and friends, whether in the city or the country, will not let me cease my earnest prayers to God, that he will confer his blessings on thee.

Ver. 9. *Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.*] But above all, the love I have to the Lord our God, whose house is here (whither all his devout servants resort to worship him, and celebrate his name), shall excite not only my prayers, but my study, to promote thy welfare.

PSALM CXXIII.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, it is certain, was composed in a time of great distress; when they were extremely afflicted by some haughty and insolent enemies, (ver. 3, 4.) Who those enemies were there are several conjectures; and I will add mine: that this short form of prayer was made by some pious person, when the king of Assyria (whose pride the prophet Isaiah describes viii. 7. and many other places) sent Rab-shakeh, and other of his captains, to besiege Jerusalem: where they poured out most contemptuous, nay, blasphemous words, against God and his people, (2 Kings xviii. xix.) It is probable, if this conjecture be admitted, that it was made by Isaiah, whom Hezekiah desired to lift up his prayer for the remnant that was left, (2 Kings xix. 4. Isa. xxxvii. 4.) Accordingly we read, (2 Chron. xxxii. 20.) both he and Hezekiah cried unto the Lord: and, we may suppose, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said these words.

Ver. 1. *UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*] Though all human help fail us in this sore distress; yet I do not despair of relief from thee, O Lord: whose majesty and power incomparably excel all earthly monarchs.

Ver. 2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*] Behold, how, not only I, but the rest of thy faithful people, wait upon thee: submitting ourselves to this severe punishment, as poor slaves do to the stroke of their offended master or mistress; and resolving to bear it patiently, till thou our Lord, who dost inflict it, wilt be pleased to shew thyself our most gracious God; and in much pity towards us remove it.

Ver. 3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.*] O be gracious unto us, good Lord, be gracious unto us; and in much mercy take away this heavy scourge from us: for we are become so beyond all measure contemptible, (2 Kings xviii. 23, 24. xix. 34.) that we can scarce any longer endure it.

Ver. 4. *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*] We have a long time groaned under the intolerable load of the derision and contempt of those whose constant prosperity puffs them up with pride: nay, makes them insolently oppress all those who are unable to resist them.

PSALM CXXIV.

A Song of Degrees of David.

ARGUMENT.

If the title had not told us that this is a Psalm of David's, I should have thought it had been composed by the author of the former; to acknowledge the wonderful power and goodness of God in delivering them from Sennacherib's army; which came in like a flood, (Isa. lix. 19.) and had overflown all the country as far as Jerusalem, (viii. 7, 8.) which might well make them be called *proud waters*, (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 5.) because they fancied nothing could stand before them. Such it seems were, either the Philistines, upon whom, when they spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim, the Lord broke forth *as a breach of waters*, (2 Sam. v. 19.)

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or the Ammonites and their associates, (x. 6. 15, 16.) Of *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *IF it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say.*] If we had not had such a mighty helper as the Lord, who took our part, may Israel now most thankfully acknowledge;

Ver. 2. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us.*] If it had not been the Lord (whom none can resist) who took our part, when such numerous enemies united their forces, as one man, to make war upon us;

Ver. 3. *Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.*] They would then have made but one morsel of our small army: and in the furious rage wherein they were, have immediately devoured us; as monstrous beasts do their prey, which they greedily swallow down alive.

Ver. 4. *Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.*] Then they would have overrun all the country like a violent torrent: and we should have been buried in the flood.

Ver. 5. *Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.*] Having once made a wide breach, by the overthrow of our army, they would have poured in more numerous forces upon us: till, like an inundation of water, which swells more and more, they had wholly overwhelmed us.

Ver. 6. *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.*] Thanks be to the Lord, to whose infinite mercies we ought to ascribe it; that he hath not permitted them to domineer over us, and execute their cruel intentions against us.

Ver. 7. *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*] They thought they had laid their design so strongly, that we could not escape; no more than a little bird, which a fowler hath taken in his snare: but, blessed be the Lord, who hath assisted our weakness, their plot is defeated, they are broken in pieces; and we thereby most wonderfully delivered.

Ver. 8. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*] This was not a work of our wit, no more than of our power; nor were we beholden to the help of any of our neighbours; but we owe it wholly to his almighty goodness; who commands, because he made, all creatures: in whom we ought to place our confidence for ever.

PSALM CXXV.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

We may well look upon this Psalm as a pious exhortation to the people to trust in God; when Sennacherib's army threatened to destroy Jerusalem. And perhaps these were some of the comfortable words, which we read, 2 Chron. xxxii. 6—8. Hezekiah then spake to them; when God chastised them by that rod of his anger, (as he calls Sennacherib, Isa. x. 5.) which the Psalmist here foretold (ver. 3.) should not long afflict them. Of *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *THEY that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*] There are none so safe as they that repose a pious confidence in the Lord: by which they shall both maintain themselves in a settled peace and tranquillity; and remain for ever, as unmoveable, conspicuous, and illustrious, as Mount Zion.

Ver. 2. *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever.*] For as Jerusalem is surrounded with high hills, which make it not easily accessible by any enemies, so the Divine providence encompasses his people who depend upon him, to guard and defend them from all dangers; not only now, but in all succeeding ages, to the end of the world.

Ver. 3. *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*] The power of wicked tyrants, indeed, may heavily afflict the righteous for a time: but they shall not always harass their country, nor continue their oppression so long, as quite to tire out the patience of the righteous, and tempt them to forsake their pious confidence in him, and lay hold on any means, though never so unjust, of obtaining deliverance.

Ver. 4. *Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.*] To prevent so great an evil, be pleased now, good Lord, to deal well with those who are truly good, and reward their fidelity; who, notwithstanding all these calamities, sincerely persist in thy ways, and preserve their integrity.

Ver. 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*] But as for those who, instead of growing better by these oppressions, decline more and more from the ways of piety, unto the most perverse and crooked courses: the Lord shall deliver them over to be punished with their oppressors; when Israel, after all these sore afflictions, shall be settled again in peace and happiness.

PSALM CXXVI.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is so universally thought to be a joyful song composed by Ezra, or some such good man, when they returned out of Babylon, that I shall seek for no other interpretation: but observe, with Theodoret, that when Cyrus gave them all leave to return to their own land, some were so ill-minded that they chose to continue where they were: but such as had any sense of the piety of their forefathers, and desired to see the worship of God, according to the law, restored, gladly embraced the opportunity of returning to their own country: where they thought themselves so happy in the liberty which they enjoyed, that they pray (ver. 4.) all the rest of the nation, who remained still behind, would come and partake of it.

This is the most received sense; else I should have thought the deliverance from Sennacherib might be here celebrated; who had carried many of them captive (Isa. v. 13. and other places), and when they were delivered from his oppression, they were, indeed, *like men that*

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dreamed, as the Psalmist here speaks. For awaking in the morning, and seeing his vast army to be dead corpses, (2 Kings xix. 35.) they could scarce believe what they beheld with their eyes, it was so wonderful.

And, perhaps, it was first made then, and afterward applied, with some alteration, to their return from Babylon. (See Psal. cxxxiii.)

Ver. 1. *WHEN the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*] To the Lord alone must we ascribe this wonderful change (which is like the sudden recovery of health, out of a tedious and desperate sickness); for when the proclamation unexpectedly came forth, to give us liberty to return to our own country, out of a long captivity, (Ezra i. 2, 3.) we could scarce believe it; but were apt to look upon ourselves, as only in a dream of so great a happiness.

Ver. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.*] Which presently turned our heaviness into such a height of joy, that it filled all places with our mirth, especially with cheerful hymns; in which the heathen themselves accompanied us, saying, This truly is the Lord's work, who hath magnified his power in the strange deliverance of this nation.

Ver. 3. *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*] And truly so he hath (we should be very ungrateful, if we should not thankfully acknowledge the singular benefits which strangers admire); the Lord hath not only restored our liberty, but declared the greatness of his power in this deliverance; which justly fills us with joy and triumph.

Ver. 4. *Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.*] O that the Lord would be pleased to perfect what he hath begun! and bring back, in greater numbers, the rest of our brethren that still remain in Babylon: which would be as welcome to this desolate country, as streams of water to the dry and thirsty grounds.

Ver. 5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*] Then this small handful of people, who are come to plant themselves here again, and have laid the foundation of the temple, with a great mixture of sadness and tears, (Ezra iii. 12.) shall shout for joy, to see so great an increase, and this pious work, by their help, brought unto perfection.

Ver. 6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*] Just as we behold the poor husbandman, going to and fro with a little seed, which in a scarce year he throws with a heavy heart into the ground, returning again and again from the field, with songs of joy in his mouth, when the harvest comes to reward his past labours with a plentiful crop of corn.

PSALM CXXVII.

A Song of Degrees for Solomon. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

The Hebrew particle which here we translate *for*, is thought by our interpreters, in most other places, to signify *of*: and so they translate it a little before, in the title of Psal. cxxiv. and a little after, in that of the hundred and thirty-first. Therefore I shall look upon this Psalm as composed by Solomon; who, you read, 1 Kings iv. 32. made above three thousand songs: though none of them (except that large poem called the *Song of Songs*, and, as some think, Psal. cxxxii. and, as I suppose, the next to this) have been transmitted to posterity, but only this: which is a commentary upon a pious maxim of his, often repeated in the book of his Proverbs, that it is in vain to attempt any thing, if the Lord do not prosper it. Teaching us, therefore, in all our ways to acknowledge him, (Prov. iii. 6. xvi. 3.) and not to presume, that it is in our power *to direct our own way* (that is, our designs, enterprises, and actions) to what issue we please. For, *though a man's heart deviseth his way, yet it is the Lord that directeth his steps*, (Prov. xvi. 9. xx. 24. xxi. 30, 31.) A truth to be deeply pondered by all, especially by princes; in whose affairs, this overruling providence is most visible. Of *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *EXCEPT the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*] The success of all our undertakings depends so entirely upon the Lord's blessing, that it is in vain, by building houses and cities, to enter into societies, unless he prosper the design: and when they are framed, all the care of the soldier and the magistrate is to no purpose, unless his good providence be their guard.

Ver. 2. *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*] And as fruitless, unless he favour it, is the toil and solicitude of you the artificers and tradesmen in the city; who rise betime, and go to bed late, and fare hardly: when they whom he loves (because they own his providence, and depend upon his blessing, more than their own diligence) live securely, and want nothing that is fit for them; though they have no such strong guard of soldiers to defend them; nor break their sleep with labour and care, to supply their necessities.

Ver. 3. *Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*] Observe it also; it is not in the power of the strongest and most healthful persons (though nature designs, above all things, the propagation of mankind) to have children when they please, to inherit the riches they have got: but the Lord bestows them as freely as parents do their estates; and makes those women fruitful, whose pious reliance upon him he thinks good to reward.

Ver. 4. *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*] And yet there is nothing of which we are more desirous than a numerous issue; especially in the flower and vigour of our youth: for they will be no less defence to us in our age, than arrows or darts are in the hand of a valiant champion, to beat off his assailants.

Ver. 5. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*] Happy is that man who hath obtained so much favour of the Lord, as to have his house as full of them as the champion's quiver is of arrows; they will undauntedly appear for him, to answer any challenge sent him by his enemies (see Theodoret); or any accusation put in against him before the judges.

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PSALM CXXVIII.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

It is not unlikely, that this Psalm was composed by the same author that made the former; to excite men to be truly religious, as the only way to obtain the blessings there mentioned of the Lord. Which, as he there shews we must have from his free gift, and not think to acquire merely by our own industry: so here he shews the Lord is wont to bestow on those who, fearing to offend him, sincerely keep his commandments.

Some think this was a form prescribed to be used at the blessing of their marriages; when they wished the new-married couple all manner of happiness; especially a long life in peaceable times, (ver. 5, 6.) Of *a Song of Degrees*, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.*] Whosoever thou art that desirest to be happy, be sure to add unto the devout worship of the Lord the practice of justice and charity, and all other virtues: and thou shalt never miss of it.

Ver. 2. *For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.*] For then he will prosper thy honest labours; and give thee a heart also to enjoy the fruit of them: yea, this will seem no small part of thy happiness, that thou art able to live of thyself, and not be beholden unto others.

Ver. 3. *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive-plants round about thy table.*] He will bless thee also in thy wife; and make her as fruitful as the vine, which spreads itself, laden with full clusters, over all the sides of thy house: and in thy hopeful children too, who shall grow up and flourish like the young olive-plants, that are set in thy arbour, round about thy table.

Ver. 4. *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed, that feareth the Lord.*] Observe it, that this shall be the comfortable portion of the man that religiously serveth the Lord; who alone can bless our labours, and continue the product of them in our families.

Ver. 5. *The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.*] Address thyself unto him in his holy place; and the Lord shall bestow on thee whatsoever blessings thou askest of him: yea, mayest thou be so happy as to see Jerusalem, the seat of justice and religion, in a flourishing condition all thy life long.

Ver. 6. *Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.*] And long mayest thou live, to such a good old age, as to see thy children's children; and the whole nation, all the time, in a prosperous tranquillity.

PSALM CXXIX.

A Song of Degrees. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm was made when some new calamity threatened them, either by Sennacherib, or, as Theodoret thinks, by those nations which combined to destroy the Jews, as soon as they returned from the captivity of Babylon. When they were taught by Ezra, or some such holy man, to recount what God had done for them ever since they were a people; and to denounce the Divine vengeance against those that now sought their ruin. The former conjecture seems the truer; because as yet, he saith, (ver. 2.) their enemies had not prevailed against them; unless we expound that phrase, as I have done in the Paraphrase (according to the received interpretation of the Psalm), that they had not quite destroyed them, and made them cease to be a nation.

Ver. 1. *MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say.*] Our adversaries, may Israel now upon this occasion say, have very often, and very sorely, distressed us; ever since we began to be a people.

Ver. 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me.*] It is hard to number how oft, or to tell into how great straits, they have reduced us, ever since we began to be a nation: and yet, by the special favour of God, they have not been able to compass their desire of our utter extirpation.

Ver. 3. *The ploughers ploughed upon my back; they made long their furrows.*] They have laid us sometimes exceeding low; and not only scourged us so severely, that the marks of it might be seen as plain as the furrows are which the plough makes in the ground, but long continued also our vexation and torment.

Ver. 4. *The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*] But the Lord at last, in much mercy, hath made good his faithful promises, and broken in pieces the power of wicked oppressors; that they might not always hold us under their yoke, and thus miserably tyrannize over us.

Ver. 5. *Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*] And may all those that still hate us and our religion, never have better success, but be shamefully defeated, and forced to desist in all their attempts upon us.

Ver. 6. *Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up.*] Let none of their designs ever come to maturity; but be blasted like the grass upon the house-top, which, having no root, withers of itself, and needs nobody's hand to pluck it up.

Ver. 7. *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.*] And as it lies unregarded by those that reap, or that carry in the fruits of the earth; so let these men and all their enterprises become contemptible, and be looked upon as good for nothing.

Ver. 8. *Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you: we bless you in the name of the Lord.*] Let all their hopes so speedily vanish, that there be none to favour them; nor so much as to wish prosperity to them: no more than there are gatherers of such withered grass appear, to whom the passengers (after the usual form, Ruth ii. 4.) should say, The Lord give you a good harvest: we pray God you may reap the fruits of your labours.

PSALM CXXX.

A Song of Degrees. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

Some think David made this prayer, after he had plunged

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himself into a very deep guilt, by his sin with Bath-sheba. I rather think, when he was persecuted by Saul, and reduced to so low a condition, that his heart began to sink within him. For *the floods of ungodly men* (as he speaks, Psal. xviii. 4.) *made him afraid*, that he should one day perish in them, (1 Sam. xxix. 1.) and he complains elsewhere, *that he sunk in the mire, where there was no standing*, &c. (Psal. lxix. 2. 14, 15.)

In this condition he implores the Divine mercy with great earnestness: and beseeches him to pardon his sins, and the sins of all the people; which made them deserve that ill government under Saul and his flatterers.

It is the last but one of the seven penitential Psalms.

Ver. 1. *OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.*] In the greatest straits, when I can see no bottom, no end of my troubles, but I still sink lower and lower into them; I never despair of thy mercy, O Lord; but cry unto thee most earnestly to deliver me.

Ver. 2. *Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*] Vouchsafe, good Lord, the governor of all things, to grant my petition: do not reject it, I humbly beseech thee; but give me a favourable answer when I deprecate thy displeasure.

Ver. 3. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*] I do not plead any merits of mine, but rather accuse myself before thee; knowing that if I were the most innocent person in the world, yet if thou, Lord, shouldest strictly examine my life, and proceed against me, according to my deserts, (Lord, what would become of me?) I should certainly be condemned.

Ver. 4. *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*] But thou most graciously invitest us unto thy service, by thy readiness to pardon all those that are truly penitent; without the hope of which, we could not so much as think of becoming religious.

Ver. 5. *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*] This encourages me to wait and expect when the Lord will deliver me; my soul is earnestly bent to expect this happy time, which I believe will come; because I have his promise for it, on which I depend.

Ver. 6. *My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*] I direct my thoughts to the Lord alone for safety and relief; which I implore incessantly with my early prayers: for they that watch in the temple for the break of day; I say, the priests that watch in the temple for the break of day, are not more forward than I to offer up their morning sacrifice to the Lord.

Ver. 7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*] In whom let all his people place their trust and confidence: for the Lord is very ready to do good; and hath more ways than we can imagine to rescue those that hope in him out of the sorest distresses.

Ver. 8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*] And he will at last free them from all those troubles; which he hath inflicted on them as a punishment for their iniquities.

PSALM CXXXI.

A Song of Degrees. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

Though David could not purge himself from all manner of guilt, (as he confesses in the foregoing Psalm, ver. 3.) yet in that matter, which he was charged withal by his enemies (of affecting the kingdom), he could safely protest he was as innocent as a little child. Which he doth in this Psalm particularly; and in several parts of other Psalms.

Ver. 1. *LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*] O Lord, I am accused of traitorous designs against my sovereign, and of aspiring to the throne wherein thou hast placed him: but thou, who searchest the hearts, knowest that I harbour no such ambitious thoughts; nor hath my behaviour betrayed any such intentions: for I never looked upon any man superciliously; nor meddled with affairs of state, or any thing else that is above my place and calling.

Ver. 2. *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*] But have levelled my mind (else let me perish) to an equality with my condition; and resolved to acquiesce in the present state of things, committing myself unto thy care, and depending on thy providence, as a child that is newly weaned doth upon its mother; just so do I silence my natural desires; and am content to be disposed of as thou pleasest.

Ver. 3. *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.*] And let all good men, in like manner, modestly place their confidence and hope in the Lord as long as they live; and choose rather to be depressed, than by any undue means raise themselves to greatness and honour.

PSALM CXXXII.

A Song of Degrees. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seems to have been composed by some holy man; after God had given commandment to David, by Gad the *seer*, to build an altar in the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (where the destroying angel stood); and the Lord had answered him by fire upon that altar, (1 Chron. xxi. 18. 26.) whereby David knew, what he had till now been ignorant of, that this was the place where God would be worshipped, and have his temple built, (xxii. 1.) Accordingly we read expressly, that Solomon therefore built the temple in this place; because God here appeared to David his father, and David designed and prepared this place for it: (2 Chron. iii. 1.) that there God's habitation might be fixed; and not removed from place to place, uncertainly, as it had been in former times. For the tabernacle, which the Hebrews call *Mischkan*, had been in an unsettled condition, except one period of time, ever since they came into the land of Canaan. It was first pitched in Gilgal, and stayed there twenty-four years. Then it was removed to Shiloh, where it remained to the death of Eli, three hundred and sixty-

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nine years. After his death, Shiloh being laid waste, it was translated to Nob, where it remained, they say, thirteen years: (but was now no better than a cabinet without its jewel; the ark being in another place, and never restored to it after that desolation of Shiloh; see Psal. lxviii.) After the death of Samuel, they say, Nob was also destroyed: and then it was carried to Gibeon, where Solomon found it, and from thence fetched it, when he had finished the temple. Which the Hebrews therefore call *Beth-Olamim*, the *eternal house*; because it was fixed to a place, and out of it the ark never departed, as it had done out of the tabernacle: but there (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 14.) the Lord took up *his rest for ever*: never to depart, that is, to any other place, till the Messiah came; who was the temple of God, "in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily."

There are those that think Solomon penned this Psalm; because (in 2 Chron. vi. the two last verses) he concludes his prayer at the consecration of the temple with some part of it, *viz.* ver. 8—10. And truly, since he speaks as if the priests were just taking up the ark to carry it into this resting-place, and there begs that God would not, for David's sake, turn away the face of his anointed (*i. e.* refuse to hear his prayer), it is not an improbable conjecture; which I shal follow in my Paraphrase, and connect also this Psalm with the former; to which it seems to have respect: if we render the last word of the first verse, as the ancient interpreters do; not *affliction*, but *humility, meekness*, or *modesty*. Yet I have not forgot to take notice of the other signification: and, in like manner, have expounded that phrase, *the mighty God of Jacob*, two several ways, (ver. 2. 5.)

Ver. 1. *LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions.*] Let it appear, O Lord, that thou art not unmindful of the pious humility of my father David, (cxxxi. 1.) who chose to endure many afflictions, rather than by unlawful means to prefer himself to a kingdom.

Ver. 2. *How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.*] Which when he enjoyed, his principal care was to provide a settled place for the worship of God: for he bound himself with a solemn oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty One, who had preserved him, as he did Jacob, in all his troubles:

Ver. 3. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed.*] Saying, I am resolved, as I hope to prosper, that I will not come into the new palace, which I have built for myself, (1 Chron. xiv. 1.) much less go to dwell and take up my lodging there;

Ver. 4. *I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids.*] Nay, I will not lay myself down to rest, nor take a wink of sleep;

Ver. 5. *Until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*] Until I have found out a convenient place for the ark of the Lord, (1 Chron. xv. 1. xvi. 1. 43.) a habitation for that mighty One; who there makes himself present to his people, the posterity of Jacob.

Ver. 6. *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood.*] And now, behold, the Lord himself, to our great joy, hath told us the very place where he will fix his habitation, (1 Chron. xxi. 18. 26.) in the territory of Beth-helem-Ephratah; (Gen. xxxv. 16. 19.) in the fields of that forest, where the angel stood, and directed David to build an altar unto the Lord, (1 Chron. xxi. 18. xxii. 1.)

Ver. 7. *We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool.*] Let us go therefore into his tabernacles; and prostrating ourselves before his majesty, let us take up the ark on which his glory stands, (1 Chron. xxviii. 2.) with humble reverence, and bring it into the temple which is now built for it, (2 Chron. v. 2—4, &c.)

Ver. 8. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.*] And be pleased, O Lord, together with the ark, the token of thy powerful presence among us, to translate thy Divine glory thither: (2 Chron. v. 13, 14. vii. 1—3.) there to settle itself, and stir from thence no more for ever.

Ver. 9. *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.*] Guard also thy priests, who minister unto thee here, and encompass them with thy goodness: (2 Chron. vi. 41.) that they may procure thy blessings for others; and make all thy pious worshippers, who are dear unto thee, triumph in thy kindness to them.

Ver. 10. *For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*] I beseech thee, have a respect to the sincere piety of my father David, and thy gracious promise to him; (1 Chron. xxii. 2. 10. 14. xxviii. 2. 6, &c.) and upon that account deny me not; but grant the petitions of thy servant, who, by thy special appointment, succeeds him in the government of thy people.

Ver. 11. *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*] According to that oath, whereby the Lord secured the kingdom to his family; that faithful oath, which he will never break, saying; One of thy sons will I advance to sit upon thy throne, when thou shalt leave it, (1 Chron. xvii. 11. xxviii. 5. 2 Chron. vi. 10.)

Ver. 12. *If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.*] Yea, I will perpetuate this royal dignity to thy children in all succeeding generations, (and not take it from them, as I did from Saul, 2 Sam. vii. 15, 16.) if they prove faithful and constant in their religion; and observe all the commandments, whereby I will teach and instruct them how my pleasure is, that they should worship and serve me, (1 Kings ii. 4. ix. 4. 6.)

Ver. 13. *For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.*] For the Lord hath such a love to Zion, the seat of the royal family, (2 Sam. v. 7. 9.) that he hath chosen to place his own dwelling very near unto it, (2 Chron. iii. 1. vii. 12.)

Ver. 14. *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*] Saying, This is the place where my glory shall fix itself for ever, (2 Chron. vii. 16.) I will remove no more; but here will I take up my abode: for I have pitched on this place, and declared that it is acceptable to me, above all other, (1 Chron. xxi. 26. xxii. 2.)

Ver. 15. *I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.*] From whence I will dispense my blessings so abundantly, that Zion (which is become the city of God as well as of David) shall never be in any want: but I will make such liberal provision for it by fruitful years, that the poorest person there shall be satisfied with food, (2 Chron. vii. 13, 14.)

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Ver. 16. *I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*] I will also defend her priests, and they shall be giving continual thanks and praise for the blessings they shall procure for my pious worshippers: who shall exceedingly triumph in my kindness towards them.

Ver. 17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*] There will I make the regal power and majesty of David to put forth itself afresh in his royal successors; no sooner shall one be extinguished but another shall shine, (1 Kings xi. 36. 2 Chron. xxi. 7.) in such splendour as shall give a lustre to the name of that anointed servant of mine; till the great prince, the Messiah, appear.

Ver. 18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*] And whosoever they be that go about to destroy this succession, they shall be so miserably defeated that they shall not be able to shew their faces; while, with shame and confusion, they behold the regal dignity in his family (notwithstanding all their attempts against it) in an unfading glory.

PSALM CXXXIII.

A Song of Degrees. (See cxx.)

ARGUMENT.

When there was no other strife among all the tribes of Israel, than who should be most forward in returning their allegiance; and the children of Judah also were inclined as one man to bring back David to his kingdom, from which his son Absalom had driven him, (2 Sam. xix. 9. 14.) he fell into a rapturous admiration of that happy unity and concord which made them meet together in one place to worship God (for so, I think, Zanchius rightly understands the last word of the first verse, which we translate *together in unity*, to relate to the public assemblies): which unity he commended to them afterward in this Psalm, as their best preservative and security in future ages. This seems to me more probable to be the occasion of it than the concurrence of all the tribes to make him king after Saul's death (which is the common account that is given of it), for then Zion was not in his possession: and it is not likely he would then have made such mention of it as he doth here, while it remained in the hands of the Jebusites. But whatsoever was the first occasion, it was aptly applied to their condition after the return of their captivity from Babylon; when, as Theodoret notes, the tribes which had been divided by the imprudence of Rehoboam, were then again united; living under one and the same government, and worshipping God in the same place and the same manner as the law prescribed.

It was as fitly used by the first Christians, to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and gentiles; and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness lies in holy peace and concord.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*] O consider, how beneficial and delightful it is, beyond all expression, for those that come from the same stock, and are of the same religion, to have no differences one with another; but to live and worship God together, in such a friendly agreement, as if they had but one soul among them all.

Ver. 2. *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garment.*] I cannot resemble it to any thing better than to that excellent ointment compounded of several spices, (Exod. xxx. 21, &c.) which consecrated the high-priest to the Divine service, (Lev. viii. 12.) and was poured in such plenty, that, running over all his face, even to the collar of his garment (where he did bear the names of all the tribes of Israel), it perfumed all the place with its fragrant odour: for just so doth this holy concord make you both dear to God, and procure you an excellent fame among men; who cannot but be pleased to see such variety of humours and inclinations all conspiring with one accord to promote the common good of the whole society.

Ver. 3. *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*] The dew of heaven is not more necessary for the parched mountains, which, though never so distant one from another (as far as from Hermon to Zion), are refreshed with it, than this is for men of all ranks and conditions, who every where perceive the comfortable fruits of it; for to this the Divine favour is immutably annexed, which will pour upon such societies innumerable blessings; giving them a happy and long life (an earnest of endless felicity), in a constant enjoyment of all manner of good things.

PSALM CXXXIV.

A Song of Degrees.

ARGUMENT.

It is uncertain by whom this Psalm was composed, but it seems to have been made to be sung by some one or more of the Levites, at the shutting up of the gates of the temple; to excite the rest, whose turn it was to watch that night, to be diligent in their office of singing Psalms, and making devout prayers for the people. It is the last of those that have the title of *a Song of Degrees*; concerning which, see Psal. cxx.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.*] Attend to your duty, O ye ministers of the Lord; who not only by day, but by night also, reverently wait upon him in his house: (1 Chron. ix. 33.) cease not to declare how great and how good the Lord is.

Ver. 2. *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.*] Be fervent in your devotion; and, disclaiming all dependance on any thing else, praise the Lord in his sanctuary with pure hearts and clean hands; and give thanks for all his benefits.

Ver. 3. *The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.*] Pray also for his people Israel, and say; The great Lord, who, though he cannot be confined, being the creator of all things, yet hath his special residence in this place, dispense his blessings, both heavenly and earthly, from hence, unto every one of you.

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PSALM CXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

This perhaps was the Morning Hymn, which the precentor (ver. 4, 5.) called upon the Levites to sing, at the opening of the gates of the temple: as the former was sung at the shutting up of the gates in the evening. It recounts several of the great works of the Lord; especially towards that nation: whom it excites to steadfastness in their religion; and to contempt of idols and idolaters. It both begins and concludes with an exhortation to give praise to God; and so was entitled, as several other Psalms are, (cvi. cxi. &c.) *Hallelujah*, or *Praise the Lord*: that is, by this Hymn set forth the most excellent perfections and works of the Lord.

There are those who conjecture, from what we read ver. 14. of this Psalm, that when it was composed they were (or rather had been lately) infested by some of their idolatrous neighbours. Whose gods the Psalmist derides in the very same manner as he doth Psal. cxv. For the four following verses of this Psalm, 15—18. differ very little from 4—6. 8. of that, which it is certain was composed in a time of great distress; as this was when it was over.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord.*] Let all here present praise the most wise omnipotent goodness of the Lord: let him especially be praised, by you, his priests, who minister unto his majesty.

Ver. 2. *Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.*] And by the Levites who attend upon him in his house; together with all the rest of his people, that frequent the courts of God's house, who is our constant and most liberal benefactor.

Ver. 3. *Praise ye the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.*] Let this excite you all to praise the Lord: for, as his nature is most excellent, so he is the fountain of all the good we enjoy: and no employment is so delightful as to acknowledge his perfections, and commemorate the benefits we have received from him, by singing psalms and hymns of praise and thanks unto him.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.*] I invite you above all other people to this heavenly duty: both because the Lord had a peculiar kindness for Jacob your forefather; and doth still exercise a special providence over you his children, as far more dear and precious to him, than the rest of mankind, who are under his care:

Ver. 5. *For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*] And because I am sensible that the Lord, under whose government we are, is so great and powerful above all other beings, though called by the name of gods; that you can never praise his majesty enough.

Ver. 6. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*] His own will alone gives bounds to his power: for, as none act without his leave, so none can hinder him from doing what pleases himself; in the heavens as well as in the earth, and the seas, and other deep waters.

Ver. 7. *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*] He raises vapours, for instance, from any quarter of the earth, and makes them go up into the air; where some of them break forth in flashes of lightning; and that (which is strange) is followed with great showers of rain: and, from unknown places and causes, strong and violent winds blow with such continuance, as if they came out of some treasury, where he had gathered, and long locked them up, till he had occasion to bring them forth.

Ver. 8. *Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.*] He made the Egyptians feel how much superior he was to all their gods; (Exod. xii. 12.) who could not defend them from his stroke: but he sent his angel, and, in one night slew all the first-born in the country, both of man and beast, (ver. 29.)

Ver. 9. *Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*] Before which terrible blow, he had given many other wonderful demonstrations of his power, in several miraculous plagues; which he openly inflicted on thee, O Egypt; not only on the meaner sort, but upon the king and all his court, (Exod. vii.—ix. &c.)

Ver. 10. *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.*] And after he had, by these means, brought you out of their bondage, he overthrew several great nations and slew potent kings: who, presuming of their strength, opposed the accomplishment of his promises to you.

Ver. 11. *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan.*] First of all Sihon king of the Amorites, who were esteemed invincible, (Numb. xxi. 24. Amos ii. 9.) and then Og, that giantly king of Bashan, (Numb. xxi. 33. Deut. iii. 11.) and, at last, all the kingdoms and kings of the land of Canaan, (Josh. xii. 7. 24.)

Ver. 12. *And gave their land for a heritage, a heritage unto Israel his people.*] Which he graciously bestowed upon us, the children of Israel, as an inheritance we should hold of him, by a Divine right; of which none, while we continue his obedient people, shall be able to dispossess us.

Ver. 13. *Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations.*] O Lord, how astonishing is this thy omnipotent goodness! the fame of which shall never be forgotten: but an illustrious memory, O Lord, shall be continued of it, from generation to generation.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.*] For though our enemies may sometimes oppress us, when we offend him, yet the Lord, at last, will take the part of his people, and deliver them: and, being reconciled unto his servants, will turn his severity into kindness towards them.

Ver. 15. *The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*] It is not in the power of the idols, which the heathen worship, to divert his kindness from us; for they are of no more value than the silver and the gold of which they are made: and are so far from being able to do any thing, that they themselves are made by those that adore them.

Ver. 16. *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.*] They are mere images of things,

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without their life: having mouths, but cannot give a word of advice, or comfort, to their supplicants; and eyes also, but cannot see, much less prevent any danger that doth approach them.

Ver. 17. *They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.*] Ears they have; but cannot hear a word that is said to them: and noses also; but they do not so much as breathe, much less can they smell the odours that are offered them.

Ver. 18. *They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.*] They that make them therefore, or put any confidence in them, are as senseless as themselves; having eyes, for instance, but do not see, that brutes are more excellent than such gods; and that no help is to be expected from them.

Ver. 19. *Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron.*] O how much then are we all bound to bless the Lord, the creator of all, who hath freed us from this stupid blindness. Let the whole nation of the children of Israel, especially the priests of the Lord, praise him and give thanks to him, who hath better instructed them.

Ver. 20. *Bless the Lord, O house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.*] Let all the Levites declare how gracious he is: yea, let all his pious worshippers, of whatsoever nation they be, join in this heavenly employment, of speaking good of the Lord.

Ver. 21. *Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*] Let them all say, with one accord, The Lord be ever praised in this holy place; who, though he be the owner of all the world, yet makes his special residence at Jerusalem.

The honour the heathens give to their lifeless images ought to excite you all, with the greater devotion, to praise the Lord of the world.

PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, like the former, is a commemoration of the goodness of God, expressed in his wonderful works: particularly those he had done for that nation. And, it is likely, was composed to be sung upon the great festivals; as every day, I suppose, they sung the foregoing; which is of the same strain with this, and contains much of the same matter; only here, at every half verse, one half of the choir answers to the other in these words: *For his mercy endureth for ever.* A form of acknowledgment prescribed by David, to be used continually in the Divine service, (1 Chron. xvi. 41.) and accordingly followed by Solomon, (2 Chron. vii. 3. 6.) when he dedicated the temple; and by Jehoshaphat, when, by the encouragement of a prophet, he went out to encounter a vast army with small forces; (xx. 21.) and here is repeated six-and-twenty times, to make them the more sensible that they owed all they had to the mere bounty of God, and to excite them to depend entirely upon it, and rest assured it would never fail them if they did piously and most heartily acknowledge it. Such repetitions we use now in our earnest prayers, when we say, *Lord, have mercy upon us,* &c. which are no more vain than these. I have variously expressed the sense of this repeated acknowledgment, according as the other part of the several verses seemed to direct me.

Ver. 1. *O GIVE thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Offer your thankful hymns unto the Lord of all; who is as good as he is great, and will continue his kindness (which hath been exceeding abundant towards us) unto all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2. *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] He is the Sovereign of all the heavenly hosts; and therefore praise him, and give thanks unto him: for he can employ them all for your help and protection (as he hath in former times), and you need not doubt of his kindness, which continues unto all ages.

Ver. 3. *O give thanks unto the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] All the kings and princes of the earth are his subjects; upon which account also, give him praise and thanks: for his kindness endures throughout all ages, to defend you, as he hath done hitherto, from their tyrannical violence.

Ver. 4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] He it is, and he alone, whose works are so great, that they surprise all those who seriously consider them with wonder and astonishment; and therefore give him praise and thanks: for his kindness will never fail, still to employ his infinite power for the good of those who are truly grateful to him.

Ver. 5. *To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Look upon the heavens, and behold, with admiration and praise, the splendour and the order wherein his wisdom hath contrived and settled them: for his kindness is as large, and as firm, and durable as they.

Ver. 6. *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And then look down to the earth; thankfully praise him who brought it out of the waters, and preserves it in its just extent from being again overflowed by them; for his kindness is no less immoveable, and by length of time can never be impaired.

Ver. 7. *To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Witness those great lights which never go out, but always call upon us to praise and give thanks to him; who made them to illuminate the world, and to be the emblems of his kindness; which sends its benign influences continually upon us unto all generations.

Ver. 8. *The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] By day the sun exerts his power to quicken all inferior beings; and excites us to praise him, and be thankful to him; whose kindness thereby perpetually administers to us all necessary things, and will do so to the end of the world.

Ver. 9. *The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And by night the moon or the stars supply its place: and let us see how much we are bound to praise and thank him, whose kindness is so constant, that, in the worst condition, it will never quite forsake us.

Ver. 10. *To him that smote Egypt in their first-born: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] We must needs say so, and think ourselves engaged above all others to give him thanks, if we call to mind that memorable night (Exod. xii. 29.) when he punished the Egyptians with the loss of all their first-born: for his kindness still continues for ever to relieve

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those that are injured, and to punish their insolent oppressors.

Ver. 11. *And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let us not forget how after that stroke he brought our forefathers out of the cruel bondage, wherein they had long held them, (Exod. xii. 41, 42.) but thankfully acknowledge that wonderful deliverance: for it is an argument why we should never distrust his kindness, in the sorest straits that can befal us.

Ver. 12. *With a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] His power, let us remember, is irresistible; which first by lesser, then by greater signs and wonders, delivered us out of their hands, (Exod. vi. 5, 6. vii. viii. &c.) to praise and magnify him, whose kindness is stupendously great, and will never cease to succour those who depend upon him.

Ver. 13. *To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let us therefore give thanks to him; who, when our forefathers utterly despaired of safety, (Exod. xiv. 10, 11.) commanded the Red Sea to retire, and leave a broad way for them to pass, (ver. 21.) which plainly proves that his kindness is inexhaustible, and always ready to help us in the most dreadful dangers.

Ver. 14. *And make Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] For he led them safely through the very midst of the sea, (which rose up like a wall on either hand of them, Exod. xiv. 22.) and will by his kindness eternally secure all those that piously confide in him:

Ver. 15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] But threw those that oppose him headlong into destruction, as he did Pharaoh and his host, in the very same place where Israel was preserved: (Exod. xiv. 27, &c.) for his kindness loves to complete his favours, and perfect what he hath begun for his people.

Ver. 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And accordingly, when he had thus delivered them, he led his people by the direction of a glorious cloud, through an untrodden desert; and there (with our thankful praises let it be remembered) made a miraculous provision for them, (Exod. xvi.) For his endless kindness, wheresoever they went, still with new benefits pursued them.

Ver. 17. *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] When potent kings opposed their passage to the promised land, he utterly discomfited them (to his praise be it thankfully acknowledged): for his kindness was not stopped by difficulties, but ever overcame them.

Ver. 18. *And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Though they were kings famous for their prowess; yet, such was his for-ever-to-be-praised kindness towards us; he gave us as easy and as absolute a victory over them, as he had done before over Pharaoh and his host.

Ver. 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Over Sihon, king of that fierce nation of the Amorites, who were thought invincible: (Amos ii. 9.) for his kindness was mightier than they, and gave us this as an earnest of future conquests over our enemies;

Ver. 20. *And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Over that huge tyrant Og the king of Bashan: (Deut. iii. 11.) for his kindness added that, as a new pledge of what he intended to do for us, when we came into Canaan.

Ver. 21. *And gave their land for a heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And gave both their countries to be held of him, as a perpetual inheritance: for his kindness doth not decay (nor loves to revoke his favours), but continues to the latest posterity.

Ver. 22. *Even a heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] An inheritance they were, which he settled upon us, the children of Israel, as long as we continue his faithful servants: for his kindness hath no end; but delights to perpetuate his mercies to those who are worthy of them.

Ver. 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Nay, when for our sins we were severely afflicted, and in danger to be thrown out of this good land into which at last he brought us; (Judg. ii. iii. iv. &c.) he was pleased graciously to relieve us: for his kindness pardoned our ingratitude, and was as forward as ever to bestow fresh benefits upon us.

Ver. 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And rescued us many a time, when we cried unto him, from the power of those that tyrannized over us: for his kindness was not spent by the frequent deliverances it had given us; but still granted new matter for our thanksgivings to him.

Ver. 25. *Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Whose bounty is not confined to us alone, but supplies the wants of all mankind, yea, of all living creatures: for his kindness hath no bounds; nor will ever cease to make a plentiful provision for them.

Ver. 26. *O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] O raise your hearts to give him thanks with the highest praises; whose power extends itself beyond this earth, even unto the highest heavens: for his kindness is so unwearied, that we may hope from thence to be ever receiving more and more his blessings.

PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This is a mournful Song, composed by some of the captive Levites in Babylon; when he reflected upon their sad parting with their dear country, and the scorn wherewith their insulting enemies treated them in that strange land. Which he foresaw God would severely punish, by the hand of some other cruel people; who should shew them as little mercy as they had shewed the Israelites.

The Vulgar Latin ascribes this Psalm to Jeremiah: upon which inscription, Theodoret (who found it also in some Greek copies in his time) passes this censure; That the bold author of it wanted wit, as the inscription itself openly proclaims: for Jeremiah was not carried captive into Babylon; but, when he had stayed some time in Judea, was compelled by the disobedient Jews to go down with them into Egypt. Yet there are those who, to excuse this, would have us think that Jeremiah sent this Psalm to the captives in Babylon: and that it is called *A Psalm of David* (for so it is in the Vulgar Latin also), because made after the example of his Psalms: as Vir-

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gil said he sung *Ascræum carmen* among the Romans; when he made his Georgics in imitation of Hesiod.

In the Paraphrase of the first verse I have followed a conjecture of St. Chrysostom's, that the captives were not suffered (at their first coming thither) to dwell within any of their towns or cities; but were dispersed all along several rivers of the country; where they built tabernacles, or cottages, for themselves: and, perhaps, were forced to drain those moist places to make them wholesome.

Ver. 1. *BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*] When we were transported from our own country into the land of Babylon, and had the sides of Euphrates, and several of its rivers, (Ezek. i. 1. Baruch. i. 4.) assigned for our habitation, there we sat down in a sorrowful posture; and could not refrain from tears, when we called to mind the happy days which we enjoyed in the holy hill of Zion.

Ver. 2. *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*] We brought our harps along with us, wherewith we were wont to praise the Lord: (1 Chron. xv. 16.) but as our fruitful vines and fig-trees, under which we formerly sat, were turned into barren willows and osiers; so all our mirth and joy were turned into such heaviness and sorrow of heart, that we let all our instruments of music hang neglected upon the boughs of those doleful trees.

Ver. 3. *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*] For when our new masters, who had carried us away captive, they that had laid Jerusalem on heaps, and had power to do what they pleased with us, required us (between jest and earnest) to entertain them with our music; and to let them hear one of those songs, which were wont to be sung in the temple:

Ver. 4. *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*] Neither fear nor favour could extort this service from our Levites, but they resolutely answered; As those songs were not made for pastime and sport, but in honour of the great Lord of the world; so, how can you imagine that miserable slaves are disposed to sing? and to sing those songs, in the land where we are exiles, which recount the mercies of God unto us, in our once most flourishing country?

Ver. 5. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*] No (said I then within myself), if I forget thy desolations, O Jerusalem (though never so far removed from thee), so as to gratify their desires, by profaning thy music and thy songs; then let my right hand be benumbed, or quite lose its skill of touching the harp any more.

Ver. 6. *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*] Let me be struck dumb, and never be able to move my tongue; if I be not so mindful of thee, as never to sing again; till I see Jerusalem, and her holy solemnities restored.

Ver. 7. *Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.*] Which joyful day I hope will come; when thou, O Lord, wilt call our enemies to an account: and first of all, reckon with the Edomites, (Jer. xlix. 10. Ezek. xxv. 12.) who, instead of pitying Jerusalem, as became kind neighbours and relations, were glad to see the day of its desolations; and encouraged our destroyers with their acclamations, saying, Lay it flat, lay it even with the ground upon which it stands.

Ver. 8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.*] And then shall your turns come, O ye Babylonians; who have laid waste so many nations, but shall one day be made desolate yourselves: (Isa. xiii. 19, &c.) and may that prince and people prosper and be happy, (Jer. l. 9. 41.) who shall pay you in your kind; and use you as barbarously as you used us, (li. 24. 35. 49.)

Ver. 9. *Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*] He shall be praised and thought to have done a worthy work, who shall snatch your sucking children from their mothers' breasts; and have no more mercy on them, than upon the whelps of wolves, or such-like creatures; but shall dash out their brains against the walls of your houses, or stones in the street, (Isa. xiii. 16.) that there may be no remains of such a cruel generation, (Jer. li. 62.)

PSALM CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

This is one of David's Psalms (as the title assures us), wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him, in advancing him from a low and afflicted condition to the royal dignity; which remarkable change would invite, he thought, other kings and princes to have a very great regard to his Divine Majesty: who, he hoped therefore, would support and defend him in his new-gotten kingdom, by the same almighty power which raised him unto it.

Ver. 1. *I WILL praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.*] I will make thee my thankful acknowledgments, O Lord, with the devoutest affections of my heart: thy holy angels shall be witnesses of my gratitude, which I will express in psalms and hymns, in the presence of the great assembly of the judges, (Exod. xxii. 9. Psal. lxxxii. 1. 6.) that they may remember to whom they owe their power and authority.

Ver. 2. *I will worship towards thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*] I will prostrate myself in the humblest adorations of thee, towards the place where the monument of thy Divine presence is; and acknowledge how much I am indebted to thy almighty goodness: first, for promising me, out of thy mere grace and favour, the royal dignity; and then for performing thy promise most faithfully: for thou hast manifested thy most excellent power and goodness to me, in nothing so much, as in punctually fulfilling thy promise, (1 Sam. xvi. 13.) notwithstanding all the opposition which was made to it; nay, in raising me higher than I expected.

Ver. 3. *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*] I had long ago fallen short of this honour to which I am advanced, hadst not thou, during all the time of Saul's persecution, as rea-

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dily relieved me, as I cried to thee: and mightily supported my spirit, by a courageous faith and hope in thee.

Ver. 4. *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth.*] Which will move, sure, all our neighbouring kings, who have any knowledge of my affairs (2 Sam. v. 11, 12. viii. 10.) to join with me, in praising thee, O Lord: when they shall hear, by how many strange providences thou hast brought to pass, that which thou promisedst to me by thy prophet.

Ver. 5. *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.*] The wonderful ways whereby the Lord brings things about, shall be the subject of their songs; and they shall think it their greatest happiness to be guided and governed by him: for they shall confess, that none can do such glorious things as the Lord hath wrought.

Ver. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*] Whose sublime greatness doth not make him neglect (as they see in me) the meanest persons; especially when their minds are as humble as their conditions: but will not let him stoop to the loftiest princes (as they may see in Saul), whom he despises, when they are forgetful of him, and ungrateful to him for his benefits.

Ver. 7. *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.*] Which have been so great to me, that, should I fall again into the same straits wherein I was before, and be encompassed with them, I should hope that thou wouldest preserve me, and bring me safe out of them all. Thy power, I am confident, will repress the violent assaults of my enemies; and by thy almighty goodness I shall be delivered from their wrath and fury, (2 Sam. v. 17, &c. viii. 1, &c.)

Ver. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*] The Lord, who hath begun, will go on to finish his gracious intentions towards me; not for my merits (I know they are none at all), but for thy own mercy's sake, O Lord; which, as it was the sole motive to what thou hast done for me, so will I hope (for it is still the same, and ever will be) incline thee to preserve and settle me in that dignity, to which not my ambition, but thy own goodwill and pleasure, hath promoted me.

PSALM CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The two last verses of this Psalm seem to me a sufficient indication that David (to whom the title ascribes it) composed it, when he lay under the imputation of having evil designs upon Saul; (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) which, as he protests against, in several parts of other Psalms, and calls God often to witness his integrity; so here he appeals unto him in a set and solemn meditation, composed on purpose to represent before him the clearness of his intentions: which never suffered such designs to enter into his thoughts. And who could believe that a man, who seriously acknowledged it was impossible to conceal any thing from God's all-seeing eye, who forms us in the womb, should be so impudent as to make this appeal unto him, if he were conscious to himself of any such guilt? And, which is more, how could he be confident (as he declares he was, ver. 19.) that God would make his innocence evidently appear, by destroying his opposers, if he did not know they were calumniators? whose vile aspersions when God had effectually confuted, he delivered this Psalm to the master of the music, as a lasting testimony of his sincerity all along, before he came to the kingdom; and a constant admonishment to himself and others, never to promote any designs for the future by sinister arts, though managed so secretly that they lay hid from the eyes of all the world: since God cannot but be privy to them; who loves righteousness, and hates all iniquity.

Ver. 1. *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*] I am accused, O Lord, of grievous crimes; but my comfort is, thou seest I am not guilty of them: for the exactest survey cannot make any thing so well known to us, as I am to thee; who art thoroughly acquainted with me.

Ver. 2. *Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off.*] Thou knowest what designs I have, when I sit musing at home; and what I go about when I stir abroad: nay, my inclinations are so perfectly understood by thee, that before I have conceived any design it is visible unto thee.

Ver. 3. *Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*] Nothing can be so narrowly sifted, as all the motions of my body and mind, both by day and by night, are scanned by thy all-penetrating eye: which comprehends and is intimately privy to all the ends which I pursue.

Ver. 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*] When I am about to speak, thou, O Lord (such is thy most admirable wisdom), needest not to be informed what it is: but knowest before I open my mouth every thing I intend to utter.

Ver. 5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*] Whatsoever I have done long ago, is as well known to thee, as that which is lately passed, or which I am about to do: for I am so environed by thee, and so absolutely in thy power, that I cannot possibly escape thy notice, nor so much as stir without thy leave.

Ver. 6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*] O amazing height of understanding! It is in vain to think I can hide any thing from it; which so far surpasses all I can say or conceive, that it excels even my admiration.

Ver. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*] Into what world shall I go, where thou art not as present as thou art in this? It is impossible for me, should I make never so much haste, to get out of thy sight.

Ver. 8. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*] If I could get up into the highest part of heaven, I should not be out of thy reach; or go down and lie in the lowest depth of the earth, I should find thee still as near unto me.

Ver. 9. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.*] If I could move as swiftly as the light of the rising sun, and in an instant fly from

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hence, and take up my dwelling in the remotest parts of the world:

Ver. 10. *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*] I should not be a jot the farther from thee; without whom, as I could not get thither, so I should be still subject to thy government, and as much under the care and protection of thy almighty providence there, as any where else.

Ver. 11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*] If I should have such a thought as this in my mind, that, though thou art present every where, yet, in the dark, I may lie undiscovered by thee; it would be very foolish: for when the sun is gone down, all that is in me is as apparent unto thee, as if it were noon-day.

Ver. 12. *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*] The darkness cannot conceal any thing from thee; who, being the Fountain of light, seest as well in the blackest night as in the brightest day: the night and the day, the most open and the most covert practices, are equally clear unto thy view.

Ver. 13. *For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.*] For my very thoughts, (and what is there more abstruse than they?) my most retired thoughts and contrivances, and my most secret desires, are apparent to thee: whose I am, and by whom I was wrapped up in those skins, which enclosed me in my mother's womb; than which there is nothing more hidden and dark.

Ver. 14. *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*] Yet there (such is thy stupendous wisdom, which I will never cease to praise and thankfully acknowledge) I was, I know not how, in such a wonderful manner formed, that the thoughts of it strike me with astonishment: thy operations in that work are most admirable: and of that I am exceeding sensible; but I can say no more, for they are incomprehensible.

Ver. 15. *My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*] Though I was made in so secret a place, yet not the least joint in my body was concealed from thy eyes; but I received from thee there (where no more light can come, than there doth in the lowest depths of the earth) such a comely distinction of parts, and variety of powers, that no embroidery can be so curiously wrought.

Ver. 16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*] For when the matter out of which I was made was without any form, it was visible to thee how every muscle, vein, and artery, with all the rest of my body, should be wrought, out of the pattern of them which was in thy mind; and accordingly, in time, when there was not so much as one of them, they were all fashioned for the several uses to which they are designed; and not the smallest of them omitted, or left imperfect.

Ver. 17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*] How invaluable, also, and incomprehensible (O God, I am not able to express the high and grateful sense I have of it), is thy tender care and providence which thou hast exercised over me ever since I was born! All the secret passages of it amount to such a sum, that I am not able to give an account of them.

Ver. 18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*] When I attempt to reckon how many they are, I find that I may as well undertake to number the sand; for, though I continue the whole day in this employment, and, after a night's rest, begin again in the next morning to think how numerous thy mercies are; I am still as far as ever from seeing any end of them.

Ver. 19. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*] Which makes me confident, O God, thou wilt not now desert me; but rather destroy that wicked man, (Psal. cxl. 1.) who, forgetting thy all-seeing eye, regards not by what means he plots my ruin: and therefore it will be best for you all, O ye men of blood, who have slain the priests of the Lord, (1 Sam. xxii. 18.) and now thirst after my life, to make your retreat, and desist from persecuting me any farther.

Ver. 20. *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*] For it is not so much me that they persecute, as virtue and piety; to which, though they are not open, yet they are the most dangerous enemies, because they make it serve their wicked ends: having godly pretences for their doing mischief; and not sticking (so little belief have they of thy omniscience) to call thee to witness the truth of their lies and calumnies.

Ver. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*] And have I not reason then, O Lord, to hate those who have such an inveterate hatred unto thee? and to take the greatest distaste to them that oppose themselves so industriously to thy holy laws?

Ver. 22. *I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.*] I detest them with all my heart; and, as their impiety is the only cause of it, so I cannot loathe them more than I do; but declare myself upon that account to be their utter enemy.

Ver. 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts.*] If I have any other ground of my enmity, or am guilty of so much as designing any evil to them, merely because they have done so much evil to me, I desire to find it out, and submit myself to the severest trials, which may discover to me any such thought that lurketh in my heart.

Ver. 24. *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*] For I would not continue in such a pernicious course: but if in any thing I do, I intend them any hurt, or so much as to be grievous to them, my humble request is, either that I may not live, or live more exactly by the unchangeable rules of righteousness, sincerity, and truth.

PSALM CXL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

There is no doubt (for the title ascribes it to him) but this Psalm was made by David. And it is little less undoubted that he composed it (as Theodoret well judges) when he was persecuted by Saul; who was instigated

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thereunto by the calumnies of Doeg, and the information of the Ziphites: whose falseness and pestilent malice he here describes; beseeching God to preserve him from the mischief they intended him, and to turn it upon themselves: as he rests assured he would. When he came to his kingdom, and had settled the service of God in that manner, which we read 1 Chron. xvi. xxiii. &c. he delivered it to the master of the music; to be sung at certain times in the tabernacle. But it was not found, I suppose (no more than the two foregoing, and the four following), till some time after the other books of Psalms were published; and so were placed here all together by him that collected this book.

Ver. 1. *DELIVER me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man.*] Defeat, O Lord, the wicked designs of that naughty man, (1 Sam. xxii. 9, &c.) who makes no conscience of what he saith or doeth to compass his ends: and let me not fall into the hands of that injurious prince, (xxiii. 7.) whom I have never wronged, but done him faithful service.

Ver. 2. *Which imagine mischiefs in their heart: continually are they gathered together for war.*] They are zealously bent to do me all the mischief they are able: which they studiously plot, and do nothing all the day but contrive how to oppress me with armed force; which in several places they have laid to intercept me.

Ver. 3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.*] And they have so traduced me by their calumnies and false accusations, that they have already given my reputation a deadly wound: for the tongue of the serpent, or the teeth of the adder or viper, do not more effectually convey their poison into men's bodies, than they have infused these venomous slanders into the people's minds.

Ver. 4. *Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man, who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*] And therefore I most humbly again beseech thee, O Lord, to keep me from falling into the power of that naughty man, (ver. 1.) who instigates his prince to the most injurious proceedings against me: be thou my preserver, O Lord; for otherwise I shall never escape the trains they have devised and laid, to supplant and utterly undo me.

Ver. 5. *The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords: they have spread a net by the way-side: they have set gins for me. Selah.*] There is no hunter or fowler more industrious and cunning in laying snares and toils, in spreading nets, or setting gins and traps, for the beasts or the birds in the places which they are wont to frequent; than they are to trace me in all my motions, (1 Sam. xxii. 23.) and to invent all manner of wiles and subtle arts to surprise me: which they proudly presume will have their desired success.

Ver. 6. *I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord.*] To which I have neither cunning nor power of my own to oppose, no friend whose aid I can implore; but only commend myself unto the Lord, saying, I have always owned thee for my protector, and thou hast hitherto owned me, and been my merciful deliverer: do not now, O Lord of all power and might, deny my earnest request; who depend on thee alone for succour.

Ver. 7. *O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation; thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*] O most mighty Lord, whom no creature whatsoever can withstand; O thou who disposest of all events; I again profess, that I look for safety from thy almighty power alone: by which I was protected (having no other helmet or armour, but only that, 1 Sam. xvii. 39, 40. 50.) in the day when I fought with Goliath.

Ver. 8. *Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not his wicked device, lest they exalt themselves. Selah.*] Suffer not him, O most mighty Lord, who now seeks my destruction, to effect his desire; let him not succeed in any of his mischievous designs and projects against me: lest he and his partakers grow so insolent, as to dare to attempt all manner of violence against other innocents.

Ver. 9. *As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*] Let the poisonous and pernicious calumnies of those that now beset me round retort upon themselves; and let them be overwhelmed by those very devices, which with laborious lies they have contrived for my ruin.

Ver. 10. *Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.*] Let their slanders (which I can compare to nothing better than burning coals, that are not easily quenched) be the instruments of their own destruction: let them perish in the flames which they themselves have kindled; and be irrecoverably thrown headlong into those dangers and mischiefs which, like dreadful deep pits, they prepared for my destruction.

Ver. 11. *Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*] This I am confident shall be their portion; for though a false informer may for a time be believed, and thrive by his lies and slanders, yet truth will at last prevail; and not suffer him to establish his greatness by such base and wicked practices: and as little shall violence and injustice avail him that relies upon them; but bring upon him one evil after another, which shall pursue him to his ruin; as the hounds do the wild beast, which, after all its windings and turnings, becomes a prey unto them.

Ver. 12. *I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.*] For I am sure the Lord, who is stronger than all, will assert the cause of the oppressed: and do right to those who are destitute of human help, by punishing all that are injurious to them.

Ver. 13. *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*] Let the righteous rely on this as an undoubted truth, that they shall give thanks to thy almighty goodness, for appearing in their vindication; and, when these false and violent men shall be extinct, they that are sincerely honest shall remain in thy favour; and receive the marks of it in thy constant care and providence over them.

PSALM CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

If the title had not told us that David was the author of this Psalm, the matter of it would have led our minds to think of him, and his many sufferings, during the per-

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secution of Saul. Which he prays to God (as Theodoret observes upon the third and fourth verses) he may be able to bear so patiently, that it may not exasperate his spirit to speak irreverently of Saul; much less to do him any mischief: but leave it unto God, to take his enemies in the snare they had laid for him.

Nobody need wonder, that there are so many prayers found upon the same subject; for that persecution endured long, and they were made upon different occasions, or to different purposes: and if they had been all to the same purpose, it would not have been strange to him that considers the pious disposition of David; who loved to spend his time in such devout meditations. And this seems to have been composed about the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, (ver. 2.) when his afflictions also pressed him sorely, that they tempted him to speak something which was, οὐκ εὐπρεπὲς (as Theodoret's phrase is), unbecoming God's anointed (Saul), and the profession he made of duty to him.

Ver. 1. *LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.*] The danger wherein I am, O Lord, is exceeding great, (1 Sam. xxiii. 25. xxiv. 1, 2.) which makes me double my cries, and beseech thee the more importunately, speedily to succour me (when my distresses call for it) with seasonable relief.

Ver. 2. *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*] Though I am now in a wilderness, and thereby disabled from offering thee any other sacrifice but my prayers; yet they shall be as acceptable to thee, as if they were accompanied with the sweetest odours: and my fervent devotion in them, with entire dependance on thee alone for help, be as prevalent, as if I could now present thee, at the tabernacle, with an evening oblation.

Ver. 3. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*] And in the first place, I humbly desire thee, O Lord, to lay such restraints upon my tongue, and to enable me so vigilantly to observe all the motions of it; that none of the troubles I endure, though never so grievous, may make me burst out into any intemperate speeches; which may give a just offence to them that persecute me.

Ver. 4. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.*] Yea, govern all the motions of my will so steadily, that I may not listen to evil counsels, (1 Sam. xxiv. 4. 6, 7.) much less engage with men, who have no regard to right and justice, in any evil practices; but always refuse to partake in their designs; though invited with the specious promises of the greatest felicity.

Ver. 5. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*] I had rather much that a righteous man should give me a severe rebuke, than be enticed by evil-doers to accompany them in their sins: for it will do me a real kindness, and be so far from giving me any vexation, that it will be as acceptable to me as the most excellent ointments are unto the head; and only make me continue my prayers with the greater earnestness, that I may not run into those mischievous courses, from which I am deterred by their pious reproofs and admonitions.

Ver. 6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words: for they are sweet.*] The effect of which their greatest rulers have seen, when, being left by their master on the sides of the rock, (1 Sam. xxiv. 2, 3.) while he went into a hole of it to uncover his feet, they heard that I spake not a reviling word (much less did I stretch out my hand against him), but in the mildest and most dutiful language addressed myself unto him, (1 Sam. xxiv. 8, 9, &c.)

Ver. 7. *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*] And yet this gentleness hath been so far from mollifying their hearts, that they still persecute me, and the small body of men that follow me: (1 Sam. xxvi. 2. xxvii. 1.) whom they have reduced to such extremities, that, like the earth when it is ploughed up, we break in pieces; and are ready to disperse and flee for our lives, with little hope of safety.

Ver. 8. *But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.*] But in this sore distress I fix my thoughts on thee, O mighty Lord, the governor of all things; in whom I repose an assured confidence, that thou wilt not abandon me to the malice of those that seek to take away my life from me.

Ver. 9. *Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.*] Preserve me, I beseech thee, from all the subtle plots which they have laid to destroy me: and though they stick at nothing (though never so unjust), and have various arts to blind the world and hide their perfidious designs; suffer me not to be ensnared by them.

Ver. 10. *Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.*] But let all the contrivances of such wicked men prove pernicious to themselves; and bring upon them the evils which they intended me: whilst I, and they that are with me, by thy care of us, escape untouched by any of them.

PSALM CXLII.

Maschil of David. A Prayer when he was in the Cave.

ARGUMENT.

When David hid himself for fear of Saul, in the cave of Adullam, (1 Sam. xxii. 1.) or, as others think, more probable in the cave of En-gedi, (1 Sam. xxiv. 1—3.) this was the meditation he had in that disconsolate place, before Saul came thither to uncover his feet in it. Which was set afterward to the tune of *Maschil*; (see Psal. xxxii.) or called by that name, because it admirably instructs posterity in the most forlorn, nay desperate, condition, to recommend themselves to God, and to depend on him with a resolved faith. Who, by an unexpected means, granted the desire of David, which he makes in the conclusion of this Psalm, (ver. 7.) and brought him out of those straits wherein he was imprisoned. I say *resolved faith*, because in the Hebrew the words of the first and second verses run thus; *I will cry unto the Lord; I will make my supplication; I will pour out my complaint before him*, &c.

Ver. 1. *I CRIED unto the Lord with my voice: with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.*] Though

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I am destitute of human help, I will not despair of safety; but with the more fervent cries implore the Divine succour: and with vehement sighs and groans deprecate the Lord's displeasure.

Ver. 2. *I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.*] I will lay before him at large all the sad thoughts which perplex my heart: and, representing the inextricable straits and difficulties wherein I am, expose myself unto him; as an object of his pity.

Ver. 3. *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.*] Now that I am utterly at a loss, and ready to faint away in a confusion of thoughts, thou knowest very well a way for my escape: though, by the intelligence they hold with mine enemies, (1 Sam. xxiv. 1.) they have blocked up all the passages which I am acquainted withal; and laid ambushes for me in every road.

Ver. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.*] Look about thee, O my soul, and see if thou canst spy any hope of relief from thy best and most powerful friends: there are none of them that dare own thee; nor do I know whither to fly for safety, if any of them would be so kind as to invent a means, and open a way, for my deliverance from the present danger.

Ver. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*] All that I can do, is to recommend myself to thee, O Lord, by fervent prayers, saying, I trust myself with thy almighty goodness, as in a sure sanctuary: I have nothing else in the world to depend upon, but thee alone; by whom I will hope to be protected and provided for as long as I live.

Ver. 6. *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.*] O let my importunate cry prevail for some relief, which will come most seasonably in this exceeding great necessity: rescue me now, that I may not fall into the hands of my persecutors; who are every way (except in these cries unto, and confidence, in thee) much too strong for me.

Ver. 7. *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*] Bring me, with life and liberty, out of this dismal cave, wherein I am pent up; that I may make my thankful acknowledgments to thy almighty goodness: which shall attract the admiration of all good men, and provoke them unanimously to join together with me in praising thee; when they see that thou art the most righteous judge, and bountiful benefactor, of those that commit themselves unto thee.

PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

To the title of *A Psalm of David*, Theodoret says he found, in some Greek copies, these words added (to explain the time of its composition), *when Absalom's son persecuted him.* Which he confesses was not then in the Hebrew (no more than it is now), nor in other interpreters of the Psalms; but agrees well enough, he thinks, with the truth of the story. So he that was the author of the Vulgar Latin thought also: though there are some passages in the Psalm, which sound as if it had been made during the persecution of Saul; at some time, when he was in the like distress with that described in the foregoing. For ver. 3, 4. he uses some of the same expressions which we find there; and represents himself as in danger to be buried in some such cave as that mentioned in the last verse of Psal. cxlii. where he begs, as he doth here, for a speedy deliverance. Yet, for all this, there are other passages which will incline us to adhere to the forenamed addition, and apply the Psalm to his flight from Absalom. For then it was he had most reason to fear, lest God should deal with him according to his sins: which he deprecates (ver. 2.) with such a deep sense of his unworthiness, that it hath made this to be numbered among the penitential Psalms, and is the last of them. The memory also of God's former deliverances of him, a great while before, (ver. 5.) may well refer to what he had done for him, not only against Saul, but before he knew him; which, as he doth not forget, so he hoped the Lord would now remember, and grant him the like again, when he was in the like distresses.

Ver. 1. *HEAR my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.*] I renew my requests and my earnest supplications unto thee, O Lord, for some relief, in these new straits and difficulties into which I am fallen: hoping, though I am very unworthy, yet, in thy abundant mercy, thou wilt faithfully fulfil the promises thou hast made to me.

Ver. 2. *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*] My sins, indeed, (2 Sam. xii. 9—11.) have justly brought these troubles upon me; but I humbly beseech thee to own me still for thy servant, and not to call me unto a severe account for what I have done amiss; but to deal favourably with me: for if thou shouldest proceed according to the rigour of the law, the best man living (much less so great a sinner as I) will not be acquitted at thy tribunal.

Ver. 3. *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.*] And I am not so bad, but my enemy that persecutes me is far worse: who without any provocation seeks my life, and hath already utterly despoiled me of all the comforts of it, (2 Sam. xv. 13.) and forced me to seek my safety in holes and obscure places, in the wilderness, (xvii. 16.) where I seem to be buried alive, without any hope of a resurrection.

Ver. 4. *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me: my heart within me is desolate.*] Which, as it calls to mind the distress wherein I was, when, in my flight from Saul, I hid myself in caves, (see cxlii. 3.) so it hath the same effect upon me; for I am ready to swoon away in this great perplexity; which hath struck me with such astonishment, that I have no strength remaining in me.

Ver. 5. *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.*] Till I call to mind, withal, not only what thou didst for me in that former persecution, but long before, in my younger days, when I was delivered by thee from the greatest dangers: (1 Sam. xvii. 34, &c.) on these wonderful works I meditate; and consider with myself, that not by my own strength, but by thy stupendous power, I was then preserved.

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Ver. 6. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.*] And then I feel my fainting spirits return again; and though I despair of human help, I make my prayer unto thee, with a cheerful confidence for thy relief; which I long for, and expect with as eager desire as the parched ground gasps for a refreshing shower.

Ver. 7. *Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*] Do not delay it, O Lord, I most earnestly beseech thee; for I am not able to hold out much longer in this great extremity: deny not my humble request, lest I be utterly lost (as I am in danger), without all hope of recovery, (2 Sam. xvii. 16.)

Ver. 8. *Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*] Though this night be very sad, yet let me hear (according to the confidence I repose in thy mercy) better news, and see my affairs in a more comfortable posture, in the morning, (2 Sam. xvii. 22, 23.) Shew me which way I shall direct my course, and provide for my safety, (ver. 24. 27.) for I depend entirely upon thee.

Ver. 9. *Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.*] Let me not fall into the hand of my enemies, from whom I am now flying; but know not whither to go, but only to thee, for shelter and protection.

Ver. 10. *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*] Whose guidance I beseech, as well as defence, that I may do nothing (no, not for my preservation) but what is perfectly agreeable to thy laws; for thy favour is my security, which I know is not otherways to be obtained: and therefore I desire the conduct of thy good Spirit (which is ready to assist those that seek it), as well to lead me in the plain path of justice and piety, as to suggest to me the ways and means of escaping the snares of my enemies; and of coming into an honest country, where I may be free from the fear of being betrayed to them.

Ver. 11. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*] I have nothing to move thee to it, but only the honour it will be unto thy majesty; in respect to which I hope, O Lord, thou wilt preserve me from perishing, and restore me again to thy kingdom: for though my straits are so great that my life is in extreme danger, yet nothing can hinder the performance of thy just and faithful promise to me.

Ver. 12. *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.*] Thy mercy also surpasses all the malice of my enemies; whom I trust thou wilt cut off and destroy, rather than let me continue in these hazards: for I am thy minister, and, though never so unworthy, am appointed by thee to govern thy people; in which office I will do thee all faithful service.

PSALM CXLIV.

A Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

The inscription will not let us doubt that David was the author of this Psalm; but that it was a triumph after his victory over Goliath (as the Vulgar Latin hath it), is asserted without ground. For though some Greek copies have such an addition to the inscription; yet Theodoret says, that as he could not find it in the Hebrew, so it was not to be met withal in any other interpreters, no, not in the LXX. in the Hexaplus. And it plainly appears by the second verse, that it was composed after he came to the kingdom; and not then, till he had got some victories over those that opposed him. Nay, there are so many expressions here like to those we meet withal in Psalm xviii. that it hath inclined some to think it was made at the same time, and for the same purpose, with that; of which it looks like a compendium, and might be intended for a short form of thanksgiving for his deliverance from all his enemies. But if the expressions be carefully examined, their opinion will appear to be truer, who think it was composed, not after God had given him rest from all his enemies, but after those two victories over the Philistines, mentioned 2 Sam. v. if not before them: for as he still mentions more opposers who were unsubdued, (ver. 7. 11.) so he doth not say, as in Psalm xviii. that God had cast forth lightnings, and shot his arrows against them, &c. but desires him here (ver. 5, 6.) that he would appear in that manner for him: acknowledging, that not only his kingdom, but his courage, his victories, and successes, were all to be ascribed unto God.

Ver. 1. *BLESSED be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*] Praised be the Lord, by me, and by all men else; by whom I have been kept in safety, as in an impregnable fortress: and who hath given me both strength and skill to handle my arms, whensoever I engaged, either in a single combat or in battles.

Ver. 2. *My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.*] I ever found him very merciful unto me, when I was in any danger; for he still preserved me as in a strong hold; nay, set me out of the reach of the most potent enemies; either making a way for my escape when they surrounded me, or protecting me in their most furious assaults upon me: and, as I reposed a constant trust in him, so he hath never failed my expectation; but, after long contests, made all Israel submit themselves unto my empire, (2 Sam. v. 1, &c.)

Ver. 3. *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!*] I am astonished, O Lord, at this thy wonderful goodness; and know not what to say, but only admire that thou shouldest take such care of so poor a thing as man is, at the best: especially of me, a miserable wretch; whom thou hast honoured with most glorious successes.

Ver. 4. *Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*] Man, alas! is but a breath which presently vanishes: what a marvel is it then, that I should have strength to achieve such things! His life is exceeding short and uncertain; and yet, such is thy stupendous goodness, I am not only alive, notwithstanding all the hazards through which I have run; but, in a little time, have performed such memorable acts, that the fame of them will last for ever.

Ver. 5. *Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch*

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the mountains, and they shall smoke.] Proceed, O Lord, to perfect my conquest; and now that my enemies are combined against me, (2 Sam. viii.) let thy majesty appear, as it hath done formerly, (see Psal. xviii. 9.) for my assistance and defence: and as soon as the proudest opposers feel that thou art present, they will vanish away like smoke.

Ver. 6. *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.*] Let them be dispersed by flashes of lightning in their faces: and so terrified with thunder and hail, that they may not be able to recollect their forces.

Ver. 7. *Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children.*] Send powerful aid unto me from heaven, (Psal. xviii. 16.) for I rely upon nothing on earth: relieve me in all my straits; and deliver me out of these great and manifold dangers, wherewith I am threatened by a foreign power of idolatrous people, which now invade me:

Ver. 8. *Whose mouth speaketh vanity; and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*] Who, as they have been wont to brag of more than they do, so promise more than they will ever perform: for whatsoever treaties of peace and leagues of friendship I make with them, they break them all; and falsify so shamefully both their words and their oaths, that there is no trust to be given to them, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 9. *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee.*] I will never prove ungrateful to thee for so great a benefit: but here solemnly vow to compose, with my best skill, new hymns of thanks unto thee, O God; and with the usual instruments of music sing thy praises, saying,

Ver. 10. *It is he that giveth salvation to kings; who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*] It is not merely by the conduct and valour of our captains and soldiers that we have overcome; but the most powerful kings owe their safety, and their victories, unto the Lord: to whom I am more particularly bound; first, for the high honour he hath done for me, in making me his minister; and now, for this deliverance from these mighty armies, which threaten my destruction, (2 Sam. viii.)

Ver. 11. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*] Grant my renewed requests, therefore, I beseech thee, (ver. 7, 8.) and send me seasonable relief and deliverance from this foreign invasion of an idolatrous people: who have no faith nor honesty, but shamefully falsify both their words and their oaths; and when they shake hands with others, as if they were their friends, intend thereby to deceive them.

Ver. 12. *That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*] Let not our country be overrun by such barbarians; but be so preserved by thee in peace and tranquillity, that our hopeful sons may grow up like young flourishing trees, till they attain their full strength and stature, and our daughters be tall and beautiful, like those polished pillars, which are the ornaments of a royal palace.

Ver. 13. *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets.*] Our granaries also and storehouses, being as full as they can hold, may afford us all sorts of provision from year to year: and our flocks of sheep bring forth thousands; which may multiply into ten thousands, in their walks.

Ver. 14. *That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.*] Our cows also, being great with young, may neither be driven away by the irruption of our enemies, nor cast their calves at home: but we may be free from this and all other causes of crying, or complaining, in our streets.

Ver. 15. *Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*] Happy is that nation, which is settled in such a prosperous condition! That is, happy is that nation, which truly worships the great Lord of the world; who hath promised (Deut. xxviii.) to bless his faithful servants with these and all other fruits of his love.

PSALM CXLV.

David's Psalm of Praise.

ARGUMENT.

After David had obtained those favours of God for himself and for the nation, which he begs in the foregoing Psalm, he composed (according to his promise there, ver. 9.) this admirable Hymn: which is contrived with such art, that it is manifest from thence, he made it when he was much at leisure; and God had given him rest from all his enemies: (2 Sam. vii. 1.) for every verse begins with a new letter of the alphabet in order: which are all here, except the letter *nun*, which is wanting: (ver. 13.) I suppose it was lost when this Psalm came to the hands of the collector of this book; and he would not adventure to supply it with one of his own inventing. The Greek, indeed (that is, the present Greek copies; for Theodotion, and Aquila, and the ancient LXX. had it not), and Latin, and Arabic (which in effect are but one and the same), have another verse, which we may well think, if it ever were in the Hebrew, began with that letter *nun*: but it differs so little from the seventeenth verse (when there is no repetition in any other part of the Psalm), that it doth not, in my opinion, look like the true original verse. And it may be doubted, whether there ever was any such verse in that place (where we suppose one wanting), for the Psalmist might be carried (see Psal. xxv.) by the strength of the inspiration, which was upon him, out of the method he had at first proposed to himself.

Certain it is, this Psalm was always esteemed so excellent, that the title of the whole book of Psalms is taken from this; which is wholly spent in praising God with such admirable devotion, that the ancient Hebrews were wont to say (as Valentine Schindler hath long ago observed), *He could not fail to be a child of the world to come, who would say this Psalm three times every day.* And for that reason, perhaps, it was composed alphabetically; that so useful a Psalm might be the more easily learnt, and remembered by every body.

Ver. 1. *I WILL extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.*] I will proclaim to all the world, O my God, the supreme governor of heaven and

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earth, how excellent thy majesty is; infinitely surpassing the highest of our thoughts: and will never cease to express the delightful sense I have of all thy glorious attributes; whereby thou art made known unto us.

Ver. 2. *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*] This shall be my daily employment; and I will sing joyful hymns in praise of thy glorious perfections, without any end.

Ver. 3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.*] For the Lord is immensely great, in power and dominion, and all other ways, and therefore to be honoured with our highest, and with our endless praises: but when we have said all we can, our best praise of him will be, to confess that his transcendent excellences cannot be comprehended.

Ver. 4. *One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*] For there are none of thy works, which we see, that we are able to understand; but, though this age transmit its observations to the next, and that recommend the study of them to posterity, yet still we are ignorant, and cannot praise them enough; no, nor sufficiently declare the prodigious acts of thy miraculous providence, for the preservation of thy people, which shall be perpetually commemorated.

Ver. 5. *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.*] It shall be my business, in this present age, to speak of the dazzling splendour and beauty of thy majesty; which I want words to express, but appears in thy stupendous works.

Ver. 6. *And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness.*] Which they that come after shall rehearse; and from the narratives that I shall make of thy magnificent greatness, declare to their posterity, what dreadful things were done, by thy irresistible power, for the subversion of our enemies.

Ver. 7. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*] And with the same diligence shall they continue the constant memory of thy numerous benefits to us: which they shall no more cease to celebrate with their praises, than a spring doth to pour out water; but publish, in their perpetual hymns, how just and faithful thou art to thy word.

Ver. 8. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*] For the Lord (this shall be the subject of their and of my song) is exceeding propense to do us good; and very indulgent when we do amiss: which makes him that he doth not presently punish, but rather chooses to bestow new and greater benefits upon us, if we repent of our faults.

Ver. 9. *The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.*] Nor is his goodness confined unto us; but extends itself in various acts of bounty to all mankind: who need not doubt of his kindness, when they see he takes so tender a care of all his creatures.

Ver. 10. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.*] Who all in their several kinds declare, O Lord, throughout all generations, how great, how wise, how powerful, and provident, thou art; which such as we, who are particularly bound unto thee for special favours bestowed upon us, ought most sensibly to acknowledge with thankful praises.

Ver. 11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.*] It is their duty to discourse of the incomparable wisdom, and goodness, and care, which thou exercisest in the government of the whole world; especially of us: and to recount the memorable acts of thy invincible power among us.

Ver. 12. *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.*] That all mankind, who regard not such things so much as they ought, may be made sensible how mighty the Lord is: and adore the amazing splendour of his illustrious works; and the admirable order he observes in his government of all things.

Ver. 13. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*] Which as they are all entirely subject to him, so his empire over them is immoveable; and neither ends nor decays: but when earthly kingdoms fail, and are transferred from one to another, his dominion is still the same throughout all successions.

Ver. 14. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*] In which he doth not neglect any of his subjects that depend upon him (as mortal princes too frequently do), but supports and comforts the meanest of them that are oppressed with grievous afflictions; and gives them a seasonable deliverance, when they are in danger to sink and perish under the heavy weight of their burdens.

Ver. 15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.*] He makes a constant provision also for them; which every creature, when their necessities call for supply, daily receive from thee, O Lord, in the proper season for it.

Ver. 16. *Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*] And thou art not sparing of thy blessings; but dispensest them with such a bountiful hand, that there are none of them live without satisfactions, but have all their appetites filled, by thy liberality to the smallest of them.

Ver. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*] And therefore let us not doubt, but thankfully acknowledge, that the Lord is not only just in all the dispensations of his providence to us (though perhaps we do not apprehend it), but exceeding merciful and kind in every thing that befals us.

Ver. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*] We need do no more but piously commend ourselves to him, and he will take care of us: for he is ready, on all occasions, to relieve every one that addresses himself unto him, with a sincere heart, truly disposed to be faithful to him.

Ver. 19. *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*] He that satisfies the appetite of all creatures, (ver. 16.) will not fail, we may be confident, to gratify in their desires, such religious persons as fear to offend him: but though he let them fall into troubles and straits, in due time will be moved, by their importunate prayers, to send them a seasonable deliverance.

Ver. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*] For since they love him so well, that they had rather suffer any thing than disobey him; the Lord undoubtedly will preserve them: and de-

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stroy all those impious men, who have no regard to his laws; nor make any scruple to abuse and oppress such virtuous persons.

Ver. 21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*] For which, and all the rest of his benefits, I will never cease to sing hymns of praise unto the Lord: and let all mankind (remembering how weak and frail they are) join together with me in this employment (as the greatest support, and comfort, and security, they have), to bless his incomparable goodness, and power, and careful providence, for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

Hallelujah.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, and the other four which follow, both begin and conclude with the word *Hallelujah*, i. e. Praise ye the Lord. And therefore might, if the Jews had pleased, have been called *The great Hallelujah;* being all of them exhortations and incitements to the people; to stir up themselves to that heavenly employment: which this Psalm recommends to them, from the consideration of several of the Divine excellences: which make him the proper object of our confidence in all conditions. The Vulgar Latin, and the present Greek, entitle it to Haggai and Zechariah: but there is no such thing in the Hebrew, nor in other ancient interpreters, nor in the LXX. in the Hexaplus, as Theodoret tells us. And we might rather think it not unlikely to have been composed by David; when Saul, who at first had a great kindness for him, afterward turned his most bitter enemy: were it not for one word, *viz.* the mention of Zion; which was not then in David's possession. This, it is possible, inclined those that made the foregoing title to think it was not composed till aftertimes: and they could find none so likely, as that after the captivity: when they soon found it was in vain to rely upon the favour of princes; some of which hindered the building of the temple, as much as Cyrus, at the first, had furthered it. I shall not trouble the reader with any other conjectures: but only note, that the eighth verse was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Lord Christ; when he came to give salvation to us.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.*] Stir up thyself, O my soul, to give the Lord, who gave being to all things, those affectionate praises which are due unto him.

Ver. 2. *While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being.*] The best resolution thou canst make is this; I will praise the Lord all my life long; and never cease to give thanks unto my God, who never ceases to bestow his benefits on me.

Ver. 3. *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*] And let all mankind, if they would be happy, preserve his favour, by being grateful to him; and not (with the neglect of his service) court the favour of princes, and settle upon them their dependance: for the greatest king on earth, though never so just, never so bountiful, as well as rich and powerful, is still but a man; who cannot be present every where when we are in danger, nor be able always to help us in our greatest needs.

Ver. 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*] For there is a time when he cannot help himself, nor, by the whole power of his empire, keep his soul from leaving his body: nay, a small accident may carry him away suddenly; and then a clod of earth can do as much as he, and whatsoever designs and projects he had laid (for any man's preferment, suppose), they all die together with him.

Ver. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.*] He, and he alone, is the truly happy man, who expects help from the mighty God, by whom Jacob was fed all his life long, (Gen. xlviii. 15.) who trusts to him that is Lord of the world; and hath made him his friend so much, that he can call him his God.

Ver. 6. *Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever.*] For, as he never dies, so there can be no defect in his power, nor want of his presence in every place; the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, being his own works: and, as nothing can hinder him from doing what he pleases, so, he will never alter his mind, nor go back with his word; but faithfully keep his promises for ever, with those that rely upon them.

Ver. 7. *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed; which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners.*] There are innumerable instances of the careful providence of this great King; who doth not slight or forget the cries of his grieved subjects, but in due time asserts the right of those who are oppressed, and can find no relief in other courts of judgment: he supplies also the needs of poor hungry wretches, who are ready to famish: and is so gracious a Lord, that he sets them at liberty, who, by unjust or pitiless men, have been held in miserable captivity.

Ver. 8. *The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous.*] The Lord sends help, when there are no hopes of human cure; for he restores sight to the blind (as we shall see most remarkably when the Lord Christ appears), and lifts up those who are bowed together, by tedious weaknesses, (Luke xiii. 11.) or crushed under other insupportable burdens: and, above all, the Lord delights to do good to them who have done good to others.

Ver. 9. *The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*] The friendless strangers are preserved by the Lord from those injuries which men are apt to do them, when they commit themselves to his protection: and so do the disconsolate widows and fatherless children find support and relief from him, against the injustice and violence of their wicked oppressors, whose designs and practices he utterly confoundeth.

Ver. 10. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.*] Be of good comfort then, O ye inhabitants of Zion, who sincerely worship this great Lord, that doth all these wondrous things: for his power and authority never fail, but from age to age will ever succour those pious souls who are destitute of human help; therefore praise perpetually this everlasting King.

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PSALM CXLVII.

Hallelujah. (See cxlvi.)

ARGUMENT.

St. Chrysostom and Theodoret think this Psalm hath respect to the return of the Jewish nation from the captivity of Babylon, and the instauration of Jerusalem, which followed upon it. And the second and thirteenth verses may well incline us to be of the opinion, that it was made by some holy man at that time (Haggai or Zechariah some ancient interpreters imagine; or rather Nehemiah, who built the walls and set up the gates); especially if we observe, that there are some phrases in it which savour of the Chaldean language. And though this can be no more than a conjecture, yet it is very certain and evident, that, in that deliverance, God gave such illustrious proofs of his power, wisdom, mercy, and justice, as the Psalmist here exhorts the people to celebrate with their thankful praises. I shall follow it therefore in my Paraphrase; it being reasonable to suppose that devout persons would be as forward to acknowledge the wonderful providence of God in their restoration, as they were to bewail (which they do, Psal. cxxxvii.) the ruin of their country; and that posterity would be no less careful to preserve what was composed in memory of the one, than they had been to continue the memory of the other: and there is no Hymn we can find so suitable to that occasion as this.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*] Let all the nations praise the Lord; who will send us new benefits when we are truly thankful to him, our great benefactor, for the old: for it is a thing highly acceptable to him, as well as delightful to those who are employed therein, and best becomes us of all other things; there being nothing so decent as to see men grateful to him that hath obliged them.

Ver. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*] To which we stand bound above all other men: for the Lord hath not only delivered us out of a sad captivity; but, in spite of all the opposition our enemies have made to it, (Ezra iv. 12.) hath raised Jerusalem out of its ruins; whereby he invites the rest of our brethren, who remained behind, to return to their own country, from whence they are expelled.

Ver. 3. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*] He comforts us after our long sorrows, which had, in a manner, broken our heart with grief and sadness; and hath, in some measure, repaired our breaches, which, like a festering wound, endangered the life of our nation.

Ver. 4. *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*] Whom he knows how to gather, out of all their dispersions, and to find every one of them wheresoever they are, though as numerous as the stars of heaven: (Gen. xv. 5.) which he as directly and exactly understands (how confusedly soever they seem to us to be scattered in the sky), as we do those things which we call by their proper names.

Ver. 5. *Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*] Let us not despair of it, for nothing is impossible with our Lord and governor: who is not like earthly kings, that rule over a few petty provinces, but the great Sovereign of the whole world; whose power and wisdom are so unlimited, that he is able to do whatever he pleases, and knows how to compass whatever he designs.

Ver. 6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*] And doth not, because he is so great, despise the afflicted; but, if they meekly commit themselves to his care, will raise them up to a better condition; and throw down the mightiest princes that proudly oppress them as low as the very ground.

Ver. 7. *Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.*] Celebrate therefore with your thankful songs (you cannot make a less return unto him) this infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness: begin now, with the usual instruments of music, to sing hymns of praise unto our God, for all his benefits.

Ver. 8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*] Particularly for the great plenty he hath given us by his almighty goodness: (Haggai ii. 1.) which shews itself, first in raising vapours from the earth; and then turning them into clouds, wherewith he covers the face of heaven; and then bringing forth rain out of those clouds: which he sends back to the earth again; and makes not only the green pastures but the parched mountains and desert places become fruitful.

Ver. 9. *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*] By which wonderful providence he provides food even for the wild goats, and such-like beasts, that live upon the top of craggy rocks: for he neglects not the vilest creatures, but satisfies the hunger of the young ravens; though it be so ravenous, that they are continually crying for new supplies.

Ver. 10. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of man.*] Let us not doubt, then, but he that takes care of crows, will much more take care of us; and not be afraid, though we are of little force, (Neh. iv. 3, 4. vii. 4.) and have no armies of horse and foot to defend us: for the Lord (who fights for us, Nehem. iv. 20.) hath no need of these; and will not take part with our enemies, because they are superior to us in the strength of their horses, and the nimbleness of their soldiers.

Ver. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*] But delights to give those his assistance and protection, who, worshipping him devoutly, fear to offend him; and having no help in themselves, nor any earthly refuge to fly unto, depend notwithstanding with a steadfast faith on his infinite mercy.

Ver. 12. *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.*] Praise the Lord, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; sing joyful hymns unto your God, O ye people of Zion, (Nehem. xii. 27. 31. 40. 43.) who have seen this truth abundantly demonstrated in your days.

Ver. 13. *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.*] For he hath made this city, which was lately without walls and gates, so strong a place, that no enemy dare assault it, (Nehem. vi. 14—16.) and hath increased the number of thy citizens, which were but few, (vii. 4. xi. 1, 2.) by the manifold blessings he hath poured on them.

Ver. 14. *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*] Which are not confined within

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the walls of that city; but he hath settled all the country in peace: no enemy appearing to infest thy borders, and to disturb the husbandmen in their labours; which have produced so rich a crop, that plentiful provision is made for all our satisfaction.

Ver. 15. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.*] This we ought to ascribe to his merciful providence, who shews by the fruitful seasons he sends, after all things seem to be killed by a hard winter, that he doth not intend by our affliction to destroy us; and that he can easily bring all our brethren hither who remain still in captivity: for when he would have any alteration made in the earth, it is done as speedily as we can speak.

Ver. 16. *He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.*] He sends, for instance, a sudden cold; which sometimes turns the moist vapours, in the air, into flakes of snow, to cover the earth as with a fleece of wool, and defend the corn from the biting winds; and sometimes into hoary frost, which he gently scatters and strews, like ashes, upon the earth.

Ver. 17. *He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?*] And sometimes congeals them into ice; which he breaks into bits, and throws down in violent hail; accompanied with such extremity of cold, that neither man nor beast, nor the fishes in the ponds and rivers, are able long to endure it.

Ver. 18. *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.*] But then, to prevent the hurt that might ensue by its continuance, he issues forth another command, which as suddenly (ver. 15.) makes a thaw; and, by the warm breath of softer winds, loosens the waters which were bound up, and causes them to flow again.

Ver. 19. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.*] In such things as these the whole world see how powerful and how good he is: but we have more peculiar reasons to depend upon him, for a happy return of our nation; whom he doth not teach merely by the snow, the hoar-frost, and the ice; but by another sort of word than that which sends them upon the earth: (ver. 15.) even by his ten commandments delivered from heaven, (Exod. xx. 1.) in a most glorious and astonishing manner, (ver. 18.) and by laws of all sorts, which he hath given us for the government of our life.

Ver. 20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.*] This is a privilege which no other nation in the world enjoys, (Deut. iv. 32, 33.) For though they all receive the showers and snow out of the clouds, yet laws from thence they have no acquaintance withal. Therefore let not us dishonour him so much as to distrust his providence; but continually praise the Lord, and acknowledge his bounty to us.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Hallelujah. (See cxlvi.)

ARGUMENT.

It doth not appear who was the author of this Hymn, nor upon what occasion it was composed. But the last verse sufficiently shews the nation was then in a very flourishing condition; and therefore probably it was made by David, when God had given him rest from all his enemies: which filled his heart with such love to God, that it transported him into this rapture. Wherein, finding how short his own praises were, he wishes all creatures in heaven and earth would conspire in a sweet symphony, as Theodoret speaks, of singing hymns unto him. And first he calls upon the world above, and all that is therein, from the first verse to the seventh: where he descends to the world here below; and calls upon all things on the earth to praise the Lord; concluding (ver. 13.) that as there is one maker of both, so all that they can say of him, when they have joined all their powers together in one choir, falls infinitely short of his most excellent majesty: who hath set forth his most transcendent wisdom, power, and munificence, in such variety of stupendous work, that there is not the smallest of them, but ministers such matter of praise, nay admiration, to those that attentively consider them; that they cannot but wish with the Psalmist here, that every one of them were able to tell us how much skill and kindness he hath shewn in their contrivance; or that we were able to find it out, and comprehend it. Thus he is to be understood when he calls upon all creatures to praise the Lord; or it is as if he had said, *the Lord is to be praised by*, or *in*, all these things, as long as the world lasts.

This I take to be the true account of this Psalm, which I refer to the times of David, because the two following seem to have been then made; and there is no other we can so well fix upon; unless we will conceive that it was a meditation, when they were perfectly settled in a peaceable enjoyment of their religion, after the captivity; of which there is not the least intimation of this Psalm.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.*] Let all creatures praise the Lord. First let the celestial choir begin, and sing their thankful hymns to him, who hath raised them so high above us in power and might, as well as in dignity and place.

Ver. 2. *Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.*] Praise him all ye angels, who have the honour to be the prime ministers of his excellent majesty: O let their several hosts and companies, in whatsoever rank or order they stand, praise him whose sovereign authority commands them all.

Ver. 3. *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.*] Praise him ye sun and moon, who are his greatest visible ministers, and unwearied in his service: praise him all the rest of the shining stars; and declare to all future generations, as ye have done for so many ages past, how glorious he is.

Ver. 4. *Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.*] Let all the heavenly regions praise him: particularly the clouds, which hang in the air, and distil in fruitful showers to enrich the earth.

Ver. 5. *Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.*] Let all these set forth the adorable wisdom, and power, and goodness, of the Lord: for by his omnipotent word, these, whom the mistaken world calls gods, were created; not to be worshipped, but perpetually to proclaim his praise.

Ver. 6. *He hath also established them for ever and ever:*

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he hath made a decree which shall not pass.] Who hath made them not only illustrious, but everlasting monuments of his splendour and glory: having fixed and settled them in an admirable order, which they constantly observe; and prescribed them laws which they never transgress.

Ver. 7. *Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.*] O let all creatures here below accompany those celestial hosts, in their praises of the Lord: whose power the vast whales in their several kinds, and all that move in the profound depth of the sea, abundantly declare.

Ver. 8. *Fire and hail; snow and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word.*] Let the lightnings, thunder, and hail; the snow, hoary frost, and ice; the winds, storms, and tempests; all make a part of this song: for they constantly execute his sovereign will, and serve his wise designs.

Ver. 9. *Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars.*] The lofty mountains also and the lesser hills; the fruit-bearing trees, with the stately cedars; the pines, the firs, and all the rest (which he hath created for several ends and uses), let them all be called upon to tell how great and how bountiful he is.

Ver. 10. *Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl.*] The wild beasts also of the forest, and all the cattle that feed in the fields; whatsoever creeps upon the earth, or swims in the sea, or flies in the air; let it join in this hymn of praise to him: who hath shewn his manifold wisdom and diffusive goodness in them all.

Ver. 11. *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth.*] But especially let mankind praise him; who (after he had made these things) brought them into the world, last of all, to contemplate his wonderful works: and first let kings (who here on earth resemble the angels or the sun in heaven), and then let their ministers of state, and lieutenants in their several provinces; and next, all the judges of the earth (who are like the moon and the stars) give a good example unto all the subjects; and stir them up, to meditate his praise.

Ver. 12. *Both young men and maidens; old men and children.*] Let no sex, no age, think themselves exempted from this heavenly employment; but let the young men praise him for their strength, and the virgins for their beauty; they that are going out of the world, for all that they have seen and heard of him: and they that are newly come into it, for all the goodly spectacles that are before them.

Ver. 13. *Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; and his glory is above the earth and heaven.*] Let them praise the incomparable wisdom, goodness, and power of the Lord: for how great soever any other beings are, there is no other god but he; whose most excellent majesty infinitely surpasses all that the earth or the heavens can tell us of him.

Ver. 14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.*] And yet so great is his condescension unto us (who are bound therefore more particularly to praise him), he takes a peculiar care of us; and hath set over us a powerful prince for the defence and safety of his people, (Psal. lxxxix. 19.) Whose fame he hath thereby raised to the highest pitch of honour; having obliged the children of Israel by many peculiar benefits, especially this; that they are a people more nearly related to him, than any other whatsoever: for he dwells among them in his holy place, where they approach to him. O praise him there for this singular favour.

PSALM CXLIX.

Hallelujah. (See cxlvi.)

ARGUMENT.

Theodoret thinks this Psalm was made for them that, after their return from captivity, had many opposers; but, by the Divine assistance, overcame them: and that it is a prediction of those great things which were done by the Maccabees. Certain it is, that some signal victory was the occasion of it; and thence St. Chrysostom hath here given us a full account, I think, of the meaning of *a new song:* which, according to the use of the word *new* in other places, (when they would express a thing very wonderful, such as hath not been seen nor heard of before, Numb. xvi. 30. Jer. xxxxi. 22.) he takes to denote *an illustrious and famous hymn, made for victories, for great achievements and trophies.* Which were never more remarkable in this nation than in the days of David; and therefore this Psalm may very well relate to his reign; who subdued several kingdoms, which had stood out, and would not submit to Israel till his time, though God had promised to give their countries to them, (Gen. xv. 18. Exod. xxiii. 31. 2 Sam. viii. 1, 2, &c. x. 19.) The interpretation which I have given of the sixth verse, need not seem strange to any one; who considers that it hath been and is the custom of all nations, to stir up themselves to fight by the sound of some musical instrument or other. "The ancient inhabitants of Etruria (saith Clemens Alexandrinus, in the second book of his Pædagogus, cap. 4.) used the trumpet for this purpose; the Arcadians the whistle; the Sicilians an instrument called *pectids;* the Cretans the harp; the Lacedemonians the pipe; the Thracians the cornet; the Egyptians the drum; the Arabians the cymbal:" but it was proper to the Israelites to go forth against their enemies, singing psalms of praise to God, (as we read, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22.) who had given great victories to their ancestors, and had promised never to forsake their posterity; while they served him only, and piously confided in him.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.*] Sing a new hymn unto the Lord, for the fresh and singular benefits he hath bestowed upon us: let him be praised not only in private, but in the public assemblies of those who have received special marks of his favour to them.

Ver. 2. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*] Let all the Israelites rejoice in him that made them his peculiar people; and hath now raised them to great splendour among the nations of the world: let the inhabitants of Zion, more particularly, be exceeding glad, that the Lord, who is our king, hath there settled his royal throne, (2 Sam. v. 9. vi. 12.)

Ver. 3. *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*] Let them leap for joy, and unanimously praise his most excellent majesty, in their dances to the flute: (2 Sam. vi. 16.) let them testify their gratitude to him, by singing psalms, with the timbrel and the harp.

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Ver. 4. *For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.*] For the Lord taketh pleasure in doing good unto his people: and will not only deliver them after they have been oppressed many years; but, if they meekly depend upon him, make them as great and illustrious, as they have been contemptible and mean, (1 Chron. xiv. 2.)

Ver. 5. *Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.*] Which shall fill the hearts of good men (who are dear to him) with the highest triumph, in the honour that he hath done them: and make them shout for joy in the security and peace he shall bestow upon them.

Ver. 6. *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.*] Which they shall not doubt to maintain against all opposers; for in assured hope of victory they shall go to war, with psalms and hymns in their mouths, concerning the great acts of the Lord: which they shall courageously sing with a loud voice, when they shall fall upon their enemies; and prefer to the two-edged sword which they carry in their hand.

Ver. 7. *To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people.*] Wherewith they shall take a just revenge upon the heathen, for all the injuries they have done us: and so chastise the insolence of the people, that they shall fear again to molest us, (1 Chron. xiv. 17.)

Ver. 8. *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.*] For their victories shall be so complete, that they shall not only rout their enemies and put them to flight, but lead away their kings captive in chains; and take their great captains and commanders prisoners, and keep them fast in fetters of iron.

Ver. 9. *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.*] In order to the executing upon them the judgment which God hath long ago decreed, and is recorded in his law, (Deut. vii. 24. xxxii. 41—43.) This is the honour which all Israel shall have, when they are in favour with God; and such shall be their glorious victories, and such hymns and melodious songs shall they sing, saying; Hallelujah, praise the Lord, by whose power and might we have done all this.

PSALM CL.

Hallelujah. (See cxlvi.)

ARGUMENT.

Theodoret takes this also to be Ὕμνος Ἐπινίκιος, *a Song of Triumph after some victory:* and the mention of the *mighty acts of the Lord,* ver. 2. seems to countenance this conjecture: which consists well enough with what others conceive; that it was at first particularly directed to the Levites (by David I suppose), whose office it was to praise the Lord with musical instruments; (1 Chron. xvi. 4, 5.) and excite others to his praises, not only for victory, but for all other his benefits. For if the tradition of the Jews be true, which we read at large in Maimonides (in a treatise on that subject), when the people of any place brought up their first-fruits to present them to the Lord at Jerusalem, (according to the law, Deut. xxvi.) with a pipe going before them; as soon as they came to the mountain of the temple, every one took his basket into his hand, and sung this whole Psalm: till they came to the courts of the Lord's house, where the Levites met them singing the thirtieth Psalm.

And, indeed, it might well be used upon occasion of any exceeding great joy; for it seems to be intended (by the repetition of these words, *praise the Lord,* or *praise him,* thirteen times; and by the calling for no less than ten instruments of music) to express the height and fulness of their joy, and thankfulness to God for his benefits: nor can music be so well employed to any other use, as this Divine and heavenly exercise of praising God, by hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs: to which the Psalmist seems to me to excite all creatures, in heaven and in earth; from the highest to the lowest. And with this the collector of these five books of Psalms thought good to conclude the whole; and not unfitly: for in whatsoever condition we be (as there are Psalms adapted to several purposes), we should never forget to praise the Lord; but after we have prayed, or complained, &c. still end with thankful acknowledgments to God for his goodness to us.

Here are several sorts of musical instruments mentioned; which I have not adventured to explain, because the Hebrews themselves acknowledge they do not understand them. We have no way (saith Aben Ezra upon those words, ver. 5. which we translate *loud cymbals)* to know what these musical instruments were: there being many found in the country of the Ishmaelites (*i. e.* Mahometans) which are not among the men of Edom (*i. e.* Christians), and others among them, which the wise men of Ishmael never heard of.

Ver. 1. *PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.*] Praise the mighty God, ye angelical ministers that attend upon him in his celestial sanctuary; praise him all ye inhabitants of heaven, where you see the brightest demonstrations (and most lasting monuments) of his power.

Ver. 2. *Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.*] Praise him all ye ministers of his upon earth, for the miraculous things which he hath done for our deliverance and exaltation; let your praises bear some proportion to the excellence of his majesty, and the multitude of those great and magnificent acts of mercy towards us.

Ver. 3. *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*] Let the priests of the Lord (Numb. x. 8.) praise him with the sound of the trumpet; and let the Levites (1 Chron. xxv. 6.) praise him with psalteries and harps.

Ver. 4. *Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*] Let some praise him with the timbrel and the flute; and others praise him with the stringed instruments and organs.

Ver. 5. *Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.*] Let all sorts of cymbals accompany their psalms and hymns in his praise: both those of daily use, and those that are wont to be employed in times of the highest joy and triumph.

Ver. 6. *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*] Finally, let every man living join himself to this sacred choir; and at every breath praise the Lord, the giver of life and of all good things. To him let all the world, with one consent, give perpetual praise.

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THE

PROVERBS.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF MONMOUTH.

MADAM,

THERE were anciently so many noble women, as well as men, who even then made the study of the Scripture their delight, when Christian piety began to decay, that a great part of St. Jerome's pains was bestowed in opening the meaning of them to Blesilla, Marcella, Melania, Paula, and her daughter Eustochium, with several other eminent Roman ladies: whose songs (as he writes to Asella) were nothing but psalms; whose discourse was the gospel; whose pleasure was continence; and whose life was fasting and abstinence.

More particularly he addressed his services of this kind to the last of those ladies, Eustochium; to whom he gives an epithet, importing her prodigious industry, with the most fervent desire, in the study of heavenly knowledge; and therefore inscribed to her the most elaborate of all his commentaries, upon the prophet Isaiah (as he did afterward those upon Ezekiel), which were sent her by parts, in eighteen books; before every one of which there is a solemn preface to her.

By whose example, and to heighten that esteem and love of Divine wisdom, wherewith, in an age of folly and vanity, God hath already inspired your excellent mind, I have presumed to dedicate to your Grace this small work of mine; wherein, with no small labour, I have expounded the most useful book of the PROVERBS.

Which commends itself to your Grace's acceptance, both by the excellence of the matter; containing (as the words are, viii. 6. xxii. 20.) most noble and princely things; choice maxims, built upon the oldest observations, and that will stand firm, and be found true, as long as the world endures; and from the dignity and splendour of the author; whose illustrious name and pedigree are set down on purpose (as St. Basil thinks) in the entrance of the book, to give the greater authority to his words.

It is Solomon, to whom the Lord himself said, (1 Kings iii. 12.) "Behold, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." And again, it is recorded of him there, (iv. 29.) that "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore." For as the sand of the sea encompasses all the coasts of this world where we inhabit; so did his mind comprehend all things, as well human as Divine.

This is that admirable person, to the study of whose rare wisdom I invite your Grace: which, that it may be had in greater veneration, the name also of his mighty ancestor (saith the same St. Basil) is added in the title unto his own: to put us in mind, that he was the wise son of a wise father and prophet, who from his infancy had instructed him in the holy writings, and made him fit to succeed him in his throne.

That likewise contributes not a little to the weight of these instructions, that the author of them was a king; and a king in the holy city of God, whose authority he had; which being a name of regular and legal power (as the same father still observes), it is manifest, that the precepts delivered by such a person, and one who was truly worthy of that high title of a king, are of the greatest worth and moment: because they have respect to nothing but merely the common benefit and public good; and cannot be suspected to have been framed and composed with any aim at private interest. For that is the difference (saith he) between a tyrant and a king: that the former hath regard only to himself in all that he doth and designs; but the other consults the profit and welfare of those whom he governs.

So that, in short, this is the work of him, who was truly invested with that threefold glory, which the ancients ascribe to Trismegistus; *the power of a king, the illumination of a priest, and the learning of a philosopher.*

But the excellence of this book will be best understood by the serious perusal of it; which will discover it to be a magazine of all sorts of wisdom: "So full of golden sentences (as king James gives its character in his instructions to his son) and moral precepts, in all things that concern our conversation in this world, as, among all the profane philosophers and poets, there is not to be found so rich a storehouse of natural wisdom, agreeing with the will and Divine wisdom of God."

And therefore it is most worthy the constant study of all persons, who would accomplish themselves with the most useful knowledge: but of none more than of those that are great, whom Solomon instructs how to be greater, and to make their greatness also lasting and durable: and especially of such whose understandings are great and capacious, able to penetrate into the depths even of the civil precepts and advertisements contained in this book; "spring-

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ing (as our great advancer of learning speaks) out of the most profound secrets of wisdom, and flowing over into a large field of variety."

In which, I am confident, your Grace will delight to walk: whose exquisite judgment cannot but find the highest entertainment, in weighing the wisdom, as well as the truth and usefulness, of these parables: and whose virtue and prudence dispose the hours of your life with such order, as not to let you want time, both to ponder them yourself, and to instil them also into the minds of your children.

Whose future happiness depends upon their being early seasoned with such principles as these: which will be the most effectual preservatives against the infectious air wherein we breathe; and a treasure of such inestimable price, as will keep their minds from being corrupted, by all the briberies of fortune (as we call it), or from being dejected at any cross turn of it; which, in this world, must be sometimes expected.

For such is the inconstancy of all human things; such is the frailty even of our own bodies, as your Grace hath been lately taught by a tedious sickness (from which I most heartily congratulate your Grace's happy recovery), that we love not ourselves, if we seek not after a better good, which is firm and permanent: a good that can withstand corruption, and defend itself against the force of time, and all the accidents of this world.

In the prosecution of which supreme good I commend your Grace to the blessing of the Almighty; who always favours the least desires of being good, and therefore will never desert your sincere endeavours of it: which are not unknown to him, while you prefer the closet to the theatre, and look more to the inside of virtue than to its outward appearances.

But I forget myself; and stand in need of a pardon for this long address: which I shall the more easily obtain, if your Grace please to believe nothing emboldened me to it, but the opinion I have that your goodness is as unlimited as my desires to approve myself, what I stand bound by many obligations to be,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's most humble, and obedient servant,

S. PATRICK.

PREFACE.

I. NEXT to the Psalms of David, which are an admirable collection of devotion, follow the PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, which contain most excellent rules of life. They are commonly called his Ethics; correcting men's errors, and teaching them how to conduct themselves in all relations: but may as well be called his Politics also, comprehending under that word rules for the government of families, cities, and kingdoms, as well as of particular persons. For, as St. Basil speaks, this book is ὅλως διδασκαλία βίου, an universal instruction and direction for all men, and for the whole life: containing frequent documents of what is to be done on all occasions.

II. And there being two ways of teaching; one by brief sentences and aphorisms, which are delivered also promiscuously, without any great care about the order of them; the other by methodical discourse, according to the rules of logic, proceeding orderly from one thing to another, till all that belongs to the matter in hand be reduced to one body, and make as it were an entire building: Solomon hath chosen the first way, which was the most ancient; as it would be very easy to shew, were there any necessity of it; and were not the great antiquity of this sententious way of speaking apparent enough from that passage of David's, (1 Sam. xxiv. 13.) "As saith the proverb of the ancients, 'Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked:'" which is much like that Greek adage, κακοῦ κόρακος κακὸν ὠόν. For it was very usual with wise men of old (as the Lord Bacon observes, in his eighth book of the Advancement of Learning), when their observation light upon any thing that might prove beneficial unto common life, to reduce it immediately, and contract it either into some *short sentence* or *parable*, or else into a *fable*. As for fables, they were only the substitutes and supplements of examples; to serve instead of them, while they were wanting, and no longer: when the world abounded in histories, they became unnecessary, because the shadows of things are useful only where the substance cannot be had; and because the aim is more exact, and more pleasant, when the mark is alive. Then those fables were to give place to the sententious way of instruction, comprising wise observations in a few words; which could be illustrated and enforced by a multitude of examples.

III. And therefore, in the fabulous times, we find those even among the poets who forsook fables, and betook themselves to this more profitable way of instruction: particularly Phocylides and Theognis, whom Julian the apostate is bold not only to compare with Solomon, but to prefer before him. To whom St. Cyril of Alexandria very judiciously answers, (lib. vii. adv. Jul.) that as Solomon's work is of far greater antiquity, he being contemporary with Homer himself, and they living a long time after with Solon and Thales, in the reign of Crœsus: so it is infinitely more weighty than theirs; who said, indeed, some pretty spruce things, but so weak and shallow, in comparison with the manly and deep sense of Solomon's Proverbs, that they were fit only for the use of nurses to prattle to their babes; or at the most for pedagogues to teach little boys. There is not, for instance, such a wise instruction to be found in all their books, as the very first of all in Solomon's, which he lays as the ground of all wisdom (but they, alas! did not think of), that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This, as St. Basil observes, is that Καθάρσιον ψυχῆς (which their philosophers so much talked of, but did not understand), the only thing that can purge the soul, and prepare it to be capable of instruction: which it is as improper (says he) to give to a man of impure affections, as it is to pour a precious ointment into a sordid filthy vessel.

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The like I might say of another most admirable precept in his book, to dispose the soul for wisdom, *viz.* "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding." There is no such word in all their writings; nor in Isocrates neither (whom that apostate prince vainly magnified likewise above Solomon), who may be praised for some profitable lessons he gave to youth, but must stoop, as St. Cyril speaks, to this great person; who, as he wrote long before him, so far outwent him in all sort of wisdom, for the instruction both of young and old. Nor doth he only give precepts of manners, but many excellent admonitions about rewards and punishments: together with lively descriptions of the events of human actions, which serve much for our information. Many things also he discovers of men's most secret affections; of the causes and grounds of the greatest changes in human affairs; of the principal things that are of greatest moment in government; of the way to avoid all manner of dangers, and to preserve ourselves, our fame, our estates: with so many other things of like nature, that the son of Sirach justly said of him, Ecclus. xlvii. 14, 15. "He was as a flood filled with understanding. His soul covered the whole earth, and he filled it with dark parables."

IV. By that name some call these *short sentences,* which we call *Proverbs:* though the word *parable* properly signifies only a comparison or similitude. The original of which name is this (as Grotius hath observed in his Prolegomena to Stobæus), that the most ancient authors delivered their precepts about manners, or about government, by comparisons: either full and at length (which the rhetoricians properly call παραβολὴ, *parable),* or curtailed, as we speak, and shortened. And these taken either from things plainly fabulous (as that of the fruit-trees and the bramble, in Judg. ix. and that of the thistle and the cedar, 2 Chron. xxv. 18. of the hawk and nightingale in Hesiod; the wolves, dogs, and sheep, in Demosthenes; and the famous parable of Menenius about the members of our body), or else from things likely and probable, as that of Nathan to David, and most of our blessed Saviour's.

V. But Solomon's sentences in this book are not of this nature; and therefore the LXX. use another word, signifying a saying as trite and common as the highway; worn, as we say, threadbare (to use St. Basil's phrase), by every body's constant use. And so doth the Latin and our English word *proverb,* denote some ancient common saying, which every body hath in his mouth. But the word in the Hebrew, denotes only *any acute and excellent saying; which is as worthy to be known by all, and to be in every one's mouth, as common proverbs are.* And thus it is used in the most ancient book of Holy Scripture for an eloquent speech, much exceeding those that had been made before, in the beginning of the twenty-seventh and twenty-ninth chapters of Job. And so the doctors of the church explain it: "A proverb (saith St. Basil) is a profitable saying, delivered with a moderate concealment of the sense," &c. or a pithy sentence in a few words, expressing much sense.

This is the first signification of the word: though in aftertimes, every saying that was never so little out of the way of vulgar speech, began by the Hebrews to be called *Mashal,* as may be seen in Ezek. xx. 49. And whether it was figurative, or simple and plain, if it did contain any profitable instruction, it was called by the same name; as we learn from the sentences in this book.

VI. Which consists of a preface, and of the book itself. The preface is in the nine first chapters; seven of which seem to be an admonition what is to be done, and what to be avoided, to make a man capable of wisdom: which in the eighth and ninth chapters sets forth her own praises.

Then begins, as you find in the front of the tenth chapter, the Proverbs of Solomon: which consist of three parts, or books. The first part, from the beginning of the tenth chapter, to the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second, where a new form of speech, any body may discern, begins (as I have there noted), and continues to the twenty-fifth chapter: which may be called the second part. And then, from the twenty-fifth to the thirtieth (which is the last part), follow such sentences as were collected afterward out of his writings, or the writings of those who had recorded them; by some persons whom Hezekiah employed to search the ancient records. For we are told in 1 Kings iv. that he spake in all *three thousand proverbs:* which Josephus seems to think were so many books that perished in the captivity; but St. Jerome takes for so many sentences contained in this book; that is, some of them, for there are in all but eight hundred verses. And some of them are not Solomon's; for in the end of the book are added certain sayings of Agur to his scholars, and the instructions of a pious mother to her son Lemuel: of all which I have given an account in their proper places.

VII. And therefore must entreat all those that would profit by this book, to read the *Argument* of each chapter, before they proceed to the Paraphrase: or at least to consult the *references* which I have made to such passages in it as will help to make the sense clearer, or to explain difficult places; which sometimes are capable of more senses than one: and therefore, if I have not represented them all in the Paraphrase, I do it in the Argument: designing all along this alone, to give the fullest and properest explication of every phrase; upon which, as I have not dilated, so I have expressed the meaning in the plainest words I could find. For, as St. Jerome speaks concerning his own commentaries upon Ezekiel (in the preface to the fifth book), "My business was not to study the art of rhetoric, nor of exact composition and graceful language; but to use a careful diligence to hit the sense: resting content with this praise alone, if the wise man's words be understood by my means." And indeed it ought to be the design of every good man, in such works as these, that the holy books (as he speaks in another place) "may be made more intelligible by his endeavours; and not that his own writings may be commended, by occasion of those books."

VIII. And in his time nothing was commended, he saith, but only that which men fancied to be eloquent. In this the Latins were then altogether delighted; but nauseated the understanding of the Holy Scriptures. Which provoked God, in his just judgments, to deliver them into the hands of those rough nations, who, in his days, broke in like a flood upon them; and turned their vain affectation of neatness and elegance of speech into rudeness and barbarism; which ought to be a caution unto us, not to give up ourselves to the admiration only of the language and of the wit of the stage; lest our minds thereby be so depraved, that we have no relish of the most serious, no, not of the

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sacred writings, but reject them as insipid things: with which disease if any be infected, they might, by God's grace, be cured; if they would be pleased to apply their mind with due attention to the study of this one holy book, which wants nothing to entertain the minds of all men, though of the widest capacity, with the greatest variety of pleasure; if they have not perfectly lost their taste of that which will do them good, and make them truly happy.

IX. It is recorded by Suetonius of Cæsar Augustus, that in his reading all sort of Greek, as well as Latin authors, he chiefly observed and transcribed such wholesome precepts or examples, as might serve him either for public or private use: which upon occasion he produced, for the instruction of his own domestics, or of the commanders of his armies, or the governors of provinces, or the magistrates in his several cities; according as he thought every one had need of admonition: whom, if any man have the heart to imitate, Solomon hath saved him the labour, which that great person underwent. He need not turn over many volumes, to search for all manner of wise instructions; but be furnished here (and at an easy rate) out of the vast treasure of learning he hath left us in this small book, with the best advices that can be given, either to princes, counsellors, judges, and other public ministers; or to all sorts of subjects in their several relations, and in every condition; to make them both pious and politic: to direct them in the choice of their consorts, in the education of their children; in the management of domestic affairs, and in their transactions with other men; in contracting or conducting their friendships; in giving or taking good counsel and reproof; in making or preserving peace; in judging of men, and of the event of their designs; and, in short (for it would be a new book to mention every thing particularly), to instruct every one in all sorts of virtue; especially in the government of the tongue; wherein men offend, and whereby they suffer so much, that there is no part of prudence more necessary than that, and therefore none more insisted on in this book.

X. Which contains the wisdom of that excellent prince, who could readily resolve all questions and doubts; penetrate into the nature of all things; and had his own family and kingdom in such admirable order, that it astonished her who came from the ends of the earth to discourse with him. And it was composed, if we may rely upon the judgment of the Jewish writers, in his best and most judicious years: when his kingdom also was in perfect peace, and there was no disturbance in his affairs.

For the book of Canticles, say they, was wrote in his youth; the Proverbs, when he was of riper years; the Ecclesiastes, when he was old, and repented of the sins he had been drawn into by the snares of women: who had made this admirable person as great an example of folly as he had been before of wisdom. Whence that common saying of theirs; "Men compose songs, when they are young; parables, when they are grown to be perfect men; and discourses of the vanity of things, when they are old."

XI. But the time of his writing these books is not so material as the design; which is excellently expressed by St. Basil, in a discourse of his upon the beginning of this book: (tom. i. hom. xii.) "The book of Proverbs (saith he) is an instruction of manners, and a correction of the passions; and an entire direction of the whole life, containing abundance of precepts about well-doing. The Ecclesiastes touches upon the nature of things; and evidently shews the vanity of every thing in this world: that so we may not think it worth our pains to be so solicitous as we are about things that swiftly pass away from us; nor waste the thought and cares of our mind about empty and vanishing enjoyments. The Song of Songs shews the manner of perfecting souls. For it contains the happy concord of the bridegroom and the spouse: that is, the familiarity of the soul with God the Word."

XII. I conclude this Preface, as that great man doth that discourse. "He is wise, not only who hath arrived at a complete habit of wisdom, but who hath made some progress towards it; nay, who doth as yet but love it, or desire it, and listen to it. Such as these, by the reading of this book, shall be made wiser; for they shall be instructed in much Divine, and in no less human, learning: it expelling vice divers ways; and, with as great variety, introducing all manner of virtues. It bridles the injurious tongue; corrects the wanton eye; and ties the unjust hands in chains. It persecutes sloth; chastises all absurd desires; teaches prudence; raises men's courage; and represents temperance and chastity after such a fashion, that one cannot but have them in veneration."

Let a man but consent to one thing, which this book desires, to make these precepts familiar to his mind, "saying unto wisdom, (as you find the words, vii. 4.) Thou art my sister, and calling understanding his kinswoman:" and he will not fail to be happy. For this is the sum of all, in a few words; "Love her, and she shall preserve thee."

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this book is joined to it, as a part of the work, and contained in the six first verses. Where the author uses several words to express the matter he intends to treat of; *viz. wisdom, instruction, understanding, knowledge,* &c. the difference of which I have expressed as well as I could in the Paraphrase, and shall not here criticise upon them: but observe rather that the learning they teach is the most necessary of all other; and therefore so contrived, as he tells us, that the most ignorant as well as the most wise may receive great benefit by it.

In order to which, the first principle of it must be carefully observed; which is this: [*a*] that *a due sense of God is a most necessary qualification to profit by these instructions:* which will signify nothing to epicures, and such-like profane persons. This is the very first word of the book, ver. 7. teaching us, that our first care must be to possess our minds with a lively sense, that there is a God; and that the highest wisdom in the world is to study to please him; and to be fearful to offend him, by any neglect of him, or by doing any thing contrary to his will. Which *fear of offending God* is commonly founded in a dread of his punishments; which perhaps gives the first rise to this fear: however, Nazianzen well observes, (Orat. xxxix. p. 628.) that we "must not (if we would be wise) first begin in contemplation, and so end in fear (for an unbridled contemplation is very dangerous); but being

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thoroughly seasoned and purged, and as one may say attenuated, and humbled by fear, so to be carried aloft in contemplation."

This is the first step to wisdom, and the second is, [b] *next to God, to bear a reverence to parents,* both natural and spiritual: to God's ministers, that is, and to all teachers and instructors; to whom, if children be not bred to give a great regard, they seldom prove virtuous, (ver. 8.) Where it is very observable how much human laws differ from Divine: the former generally only providing that due regard be given by children to their *fathers,* but taking no notice of *mothers;* as may be seen in the Persian laws mentioned by Aristotle, the Roman described in the Digests and Constitutions, and several passages of the Greek philosophers, which we find in Epictetus and Simplicius, who (as Grotius notes upon the fifth commandment) consult only the honour of the *father:* but God in his law takes care to preserve a just reverence both to *father* and *mother* equally; as the persons whose ministry he uses to bring us into the world. And accordingly not only Solomon in this place and many other, but the son of Sirach also (who was bred under that Divine institution), presses the duty owing to both very largely, in the first sixteen verses of the third chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

Now one of the first things *parents* should take care of, is to teach their children [c] *to avoid evil company* (as it follows here, ver. 10.) and then to represent vice in its true colours, as Solomon here doth one sort of wickedness, (ver. 11, 12, &c.) the root of which he shews is *love of money:* which therefore should be looked upon as most odious; and, indeed, the root of all evil, (ver. 18, 19.)

Their stupid blindness also is to be represented, who will take no warning: but though destruction be plainly before their eyes in the way wherein they are; yet will go on to complete their ruin, (ver. 17.)

And they are to be admonished also to hearken to the voice of wisdom presently, wheresoever they meet with it: which is every where, (ver. 20, &c.) Which is pressed here, (ver. 24, &c.) from this consideration, that there will be a time when they shall stand in need of God's help; but not find it, if they have slighted his importunities to obedience. For he is not only good, but just also: and not so easy, as to be moved merely by prayers and entreaties (and that when we are in distress), which have more of self-love in them, than love to him. Whose wise providence requites men in their kind; and destroys them by that which they most desire.

"In short, in this chapter he introduces Wisdom speaking to his son, or to her children in general; inviting them to love her, and by no means to tread in the way of sinners: but to keep close to her directions; threatening destruction to those who contemned this counsel."

There seem to be three proverbial sayings in it. One, ver. 17. which may be four or five ways interpreted: two of which I have comprised in the Paraphrase, being the most common and natural. Another, ver. 31. like to that in Terence, "Tute hoc intrivisti, omne hoc vorandum est tibi." And the other in the next, (ver. 32.) where those words, *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them,* teach us that it is a great part of wisdom, to be able to bear a great fortune, as we call it. Of which, among the Jews, Jason was an example in aftertimes, who was undone by his successes, (2 Maccab. v. 6, 7, &c.)

Ver. 1. *THE Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.*] This book contains some notable and very useful sayings of that wise prince, king Solomon, the son of that devout prince, king David; by whose special appointment he succeeded him in the government of God's peculiar people Israel, for which (according to David's prayer Psal. lxxii. and his own, 1 Kings iii. 9.) God endued him with an extraordinary degree of understanding.

Ver. 2. *To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.*] The scope of them, is to make a man *know* what it is to be truly wise; and *instruct* him how to avoid those errors which men are apt to fall into, or to correct them if he hath been misled and run into them; and to make him *understand* when good advice is given him; nay, to be able to give it unto others.

Ver. 3. *To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity.*] For they will furnish him with the most excellent notions, and make him capable to understand things of highest concernment: both how to be just and good in all *private transactions;* and *in public trusts and offices* to judge and act according to right and equity; and every other way, to *be upright and exactly virtuous.*

Ver. 4. *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.*] The most unskilful and incautious persons may here learn to be *circumspect and wary;* and they who are childish and inconsiderate, get so much knowledge, as to behave themselves with *prudence and discretion.*

Ver. 5. *A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.*] As for him that is wise already, he will not lose his labour in reading this book; which will make him still wiser. And, indeed, it is principally designed for the improvement of him that is so wise, as *to be willing to learn more:* who shall both gain a *clearer knowledge* of what he understands, and also make such additions, that he shall be fit to be a *counsellor to kings, and govern the affairs of state* in the greatest kingdoms.

Ver. 6. *To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.*] He shall comprehend the most *useful maxims;* and be able to express them also with the *greatest elegance:* the *weightiest sayings* of wise men shall be easy to him; and their *abstrusest notions* shall not be hidden from him.

Ver. 7. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*] In the first place, then, let all, both simple and wise, look upon an awful sense of God, a devout affection to him, and fear to offend him, as the chiefest point, and the very foundation of all wisdom: without which men are but fools; and, having no regard to their Creator, will despise the wisest instructions that I can give them. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 8. *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.*] And next to God let me advise thee, my son (or whoever thou art that comest to learn of me in this book), to reverence thy parents. And not only to hearken unto thy *father,* when he teaches thee to fear God, or tells thee that thou doest amiss; but to let thy *mother's* commands be a law to thee; especially when

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she bids thee observe the directions of thy tutors and public instructors, unto whom she commits thee: from which be sure never to depart. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 9. *For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.*] But value their counsels more than the fairest ornaments thy parents can put upon thy head; or the most precious chains wherewith they can adorn thy neck: for they shall add a far greater grace unto thee; and make thee more acceptable both with God, and with all worthy men.

Ver. 10. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*] There will be those who will make it their business to seduce thee from their obedience; but remember, my son, that none can love thee so well as they: and, therefore, if lewd persons (who have no respect to God, or to their pious parents and instructors) persuade thee to bear them company, by no means yield to their greatest importunities; but flee their society. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 11. *If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause.*] They may represent, perhaps, what advantage it will be to thee, to join with them in the breach of the very next commandment to that, of *honouring thy father and thy mother:* saying, Come along with us to our lurking-places, where nobody can see us; and from thence set upon a wealthy traveller, who is to go that way, and take away his life: what though he be innocent, we shall the more easily dispatch him, when he suspects no danger, and hath given us no provocation.

Ver. 12. *Let us swallow them up alive, as the grave, and whole, as those who go down into the pit.*] And though he should have many servants or companions with him to defend him, let not that affright thee; for we are enough of us to kill them all with ease in a moment, or to strangle them, and bury them alive: so that none shall escape to tell any tales; nor shall they make any noise; nay, it shall not be known what is become of them.

Ver. 13. *We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil.*] The booty shall be great; for we are sure to find vast treasures, and all manner of precious things: enough to enrich us all, and furnish our houses bravely, that we may live splendidly all our days.

Ver. 14. *Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse.*] Come in for a share of it; and thou shalt have as much of it as we, who have been longer at the trade: for we live like friends, among whom all things are common; there is but one purse among us all, in which every one hath an equal interest.

Ver. 15. *My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.*] But, my son (or whoever thou art that wilt learn of me), let them not prevail with thee to go along with them, or to betake thyself to such a course of life: but if thou findest an inclination to it, stop it presently, and stir not one step in their company, or after their example.

Ver. 16. *For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.*] For it is not one single murder (or robbery) in which they will engage thee (though the guilt of that is too horrid to venture upon), but they will be always hurrying thee to some new mischief or other; and as soon as one mischief is over, they will be ready for, and make haste to commit, another.

Ver. 17. *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.*] Flee from their society, therefore, now that I have given thee this warning: and be not so foolish and incautious as the silly birds, who use to run into the snare, or the net, which they see the fowler lay before their eyes, (vii. 23.)

Ver. 18. *And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.*] For as he doth not lay his net in vain, but they are caught therein; so assure thyself these men are setting a trap for themselves, when they lie in wait to take away the lives of others: for they shall not always escape the hand of justice; but at last be taken and suffer, either by a special vengeance of God, or by his ministers, what they have deserved.

Ver. 19. *So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.*] Such is the fate of him that greedily endeavours to enrich himself by such wicked means. As the bird, enticed by a little chaff, falls into a snare, which it doth not perceive, so he on a sudden loses his life, to satisfy a vain desire of worldly pelf, which then he cannot enjoy.

Ver. 20. *Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.*] Let me advise you, therefore, rather to hearken to the manifold instructions of wisdom; whose most excellent counsels you cannot but be as well acquainted withal, as you are with that which is proclaimed in the open streets: for you hear them in the plain dictates of your own consciences, in the laws of God, in the mouth of his prophets and ministers, in the admonitions and examples of good men, and in the course of his providence and wise government; which call upon you more earnestly and loudly than these lewd seducers, to follow and obey them.

Ver. 21. *She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying.*] There is no place, where this cry of virtue and piety is not heard; which is not ashamed of itself, nor lurks in darkness, like those impious seducers, but appears openly in the midst of the greatest crowds; where no noise can drown its voice, no business, either public or private, can thrust by its reproof; but still it interposes itself, and every body, even those wicked men that flee from it, hear it calling to them;

Ver. 22. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*] And representing their unaccountable folly and stupidity, in such unanswerable questions as these: Is it not apparent, by many examples, that such men as you are deceived and abused with vain hopes? why then do you continue the cheat? have you not played the fool long enough, but you will still act against your reason, and against your interest? where lies the pleasure of scoffing at religion and virtue, that you will never give it over? is any man so wise, that he needs no monitor? or is ignorance so laudable, that a man should hate those who would inform him?

Ver. 23. *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*] Do not turn away from such checks as these; but repent in time, and resolve to learn your duty. It is not too late; for if you will listen to the secret rebukes of your own consciences, and to the open reproofs of my prophets, and fol-

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low their directions, I will plentifully communicate my mind, and infuse the very sense of it into you: it is not hard to find, nor will I conceal any thing of it, but plainly shew you all that I require of you.

Ver. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.*] Which offer if you refuse, nay, go on obstinately to despise instruction, then hear the doom which God, whose voice wisdom is, passes upon you: Because I have pressed you often to amend, and ye would not yield to me; nay, I have been very urgent and earnest with you (offering you my assistance, heaping upon you many benefits, and when they would do no good, laying on corrections, as well as shewing you the way to happiness), and none of you would so much as attend unto me:

Ver. 25. *But ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof.*] But, quite contrary, set at nought all the good advice I gave you, as if they had been but vain and idle words; and slighted all my reproofs and threatenings, as if they had been ridiculous, or of no moment:

Ver. 26. *I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.*] Therefore I will repay you in your kind; and as little regard what becomes of you, in the day of your calamity (which like a dismal cloud I will bring upon you unavoidably); I will be utterly unconcerned, when you know not which way to turn yourselves; but are become the scorn of those who shall see you quake and tremble at that which before you would not fear at all.

Ver. 27. *When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.*] Though it prove such a dreadful calamity, as will lay all waste, it shall not move me to relieve you; but I will let it sweep you, and all you have, away, like a whirlwind: and when you fall into the most pinching outward distresses, and into the sorest anguish of mind, you shall evidently see, it was my pleasure to reduce you to those inextricable straits and pressures.

Ver. 28. *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.*] For then (hearken all you that have not yet sinned to this degree of obstinacy) it will be very hard for these men not to think of me, whom before they would not regard: nay, they shall cry to me for help, but I will send them none; they shall seek my favour importunately, but without the least success.

Ver. 29. *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.*] Because, when time was, they hated that knowledge, of which now they are forced to be desirous: and when they were earnestly solicited to have some regard to God and to religion, they would not consent unto it.

Ver. 30. *They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof.*] But (as was said before) rejected my good advice with such disdain, as if it had been a grievance to them; and slighted, nay, contemned, all those reproofs, whereby I would have reclaimed them from their impiety.

Ver. 31. *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.*] Therefore, as it is just that men should reap what they sow, and eat such fruit as they plant, so these men shall suffer the punishments which their wicked doings naturally produce: nay, be glutted and surfeited with the miserable effects of their own counsels and contrivances.

Ver. 32. *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*] For let them alone, and they need nobody but themselves to destroy them: their escaping dangers, only making them more audacious to run into them; and their receiving daily additions of riches and honours, supplying their folly with means to hasten their undoing.

Ver. 33. *But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.*] Such a vast difference there is between wicked and virtuous men. For whoso follows my counsels, and takes the courses to which I direct him, shall even then be safe, and possess what he hath in peace, when he sees these fools come to ruin; nay, he shall not be so much as disturbed with the fear of any mischief; but rest secure of a watchful providence over him.

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

The attention of those that read this book being bespoke in the foregoing chapter, he persuades them not only to read, but to receive and obey these good counsels; by representing the benefits of being wise, that is, good and virtuous; and the mischiefs a man shall thereby avoid. The chief is, that he is sure to be under the guidance and blessing of God, who will impart more and more of himself to those that study wisdom; which is the scope of the former part of this chapter: and as, on the contrary, if he do not order his ways by the rules of wisdom, he is sure to wander most dangerously; so, if he keep close to them, they will preserve him from utter ruin; which is the design of the latter part of it. Where, under the figure of an adulterous woman, (ver. 16.) some think he persuades us to shun all those [*a*] doctrines which draw away the mind from God; such as those of the Epicureans and idolaters. But I take this to be intimated before, (ver. 12.) and therefore understand him literally: and then he seems to give a caution against the breach of the next commandment to that mentioned in the first chapter, (ver. 10, 11.) where he charges his son by no means to consent to join with murderers; and here to shun fornication and adultery, which alienate the mind quite from wisdom, (ver. 16, 17, &c.)

This therefore is one of the first things wisdom directs us unto, and a principal benefit we receive by it; *to preserve our understandings from being corrupted by keeping our bodies pure and undefiled.* For too many, giving up themselves to fleshly lusts, are thereby wholly perverted, and never recover themselves, but live and die like fools.

And one of the next points of wisdom is, [*b*] to be taught by the dear-bought experience of others; who have been ruined, body and soul, by those lewd courses to which we are enticed. And here the wise man leads us back as far as the old world; which was wholly destroyed by such villanies as men's brutish lusts and passions carry them to commit. This seems to be implied in the word *Rephaim*, ver. 18. (concerning which, see Mr. Mede, p. 42.) who, being abominably debauched themselves, had corrupted the rest of the world: so that there was

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no way left to purge it, but by extirpating the whole race of mankind, except the family of Noah.

In short, here are both promises and threatenings to excite us to the study of wisdom; together with good directions to make our proceedings successful; which are principally these. First, our own *diligence;* secondly, *dependance upon God for help and assistance;* thirdly, *a due value of that which we seek;* fourthly, *avoiding such things as will plainly seduce us;* and, lastly, *putting in practice what we know,* that we may know more: for want of which many learned men have proved worse than the most ignorant. Most of these are the sense of the beginning of the chapter; and the last of them is the sense of ver. 10, 11.

[c] There are those who look upon ver. 4. as a *proverbial saying,* borrowed from those that dig in mines: the former part of it expressing eager desire and great diligence; and the latter, invincible resolution and constant perseverance, notwithstanding those difficulties that occur to discourage our labour. Both which I have taken notice of in the Paraphrase; though I see nothing *proverbial* in it, more than in many other similitudes.

[d] I do not know whether I need observe (it is so easy) that the phrase we meet withal ver. 19. *go unto her,* is a modest expression; used frequently in the holy books: as may be seen very often in one chapter, Gen. xxxviii. 2. 8, 9. 16. 18.

Ver. 1. *MY son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee.*] And now, my son, whose happiness I most heartily desire, let me tell thee for thy farther encouragement; that if thou dost entertain these exhortations which I have now given thee, and keep these precepts in remembrance, for the same end that corn is sown and covered in the ground:

Ver. 2. *So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding.*] Listening with diligent attention, not to the enticements of such evil men as I have described, but to the counsels and instructions of wisdom, with sincere affection, applying thy mind to understand thy duty:

Ver. 3. *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding.*] And moreover, if thou expressest such a desire of it, as men do of that which they most need; and without which they are in danger to perish; praying those that are able to inform thee; and beseeching God likewise with ardent devotion, that he would bring thee acquainted with it:

Ver. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures.*] If thou dost value this wisdom above the greatest treasures, and shew thy esteem of it by studious seeking for it, as covetous men do for money; laying hold upon all occasions of profiting in knowledge, and pursuing thy advantages (as they do) when thou meetest with them; not giving over thy labour presently; if thou findest not what thou desirest; but inquiring still, and sparing no pains to know what the will of the Lord is: See Arg. [c]

Ver. 5. *Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*] Then thou shalt not fail to understand what it is to be truly religious; and that there is no wisdom comparable to it: and shalt find also what reason there is to reverence, worship, and solicitously obey him, who is the almighty Creator, Governor, and Judge of all the world.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*] For as wisdom, no less than all other good things, is the gift of the Lord (without whom all our pains and study about it will be ineffectual), so there is no doubt he will bestow it on those who esteem it above all worldly goods; especially this most necessary part of it: which he hath already imparted to us by his prophets and men inspired; who have given us a true knowledge and understanding of him.

Ver. 7. *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*] And have assured us, that he hath solid and durable blessings (transcending all the transitory things of this life) reserved in store for upright men: and will protect all those, by his almighty providence, whose care it is to perform and complete obedience to him in all things.

Ver. 8. *He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.*] That so he may preserve them in their integrity; and encourage them neither to swerve from the rules of justice, nor to cease to exercise mercy and kindness: for he hath a great favour to such pious persons; and will be their keeper and defender in such proceedings.

Ver. 9. *Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.*] By which thou shalt understand that justice and mercy in thy private dealings, and faithful discharge of thy trust in all public offices, and uprightness in every other virtue, are all of them the best, the most plain, easy, and natural way a man can take to be happy.

Ver. 10. *When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul.*] And when wisdom hath thus taken possession of thy very heart and affections; and thou findest an inward pleasure and satisfaction by observing the rules of piety and all manner of virtue:

Ver. 11. *Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.*] This alone will be a sufficient security to thee, and make thee unwilling to depart from them. For thy own experience will teach thee, that it is the greatest cunning to go in those plain and open ways, and that no men understand their own interest so well, as they cannot be persuaded by any means to forsake them.

Ver. 12. *To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things.*] Though otherwise thou mightest be seduced into a wrong course, yet this will deliver thee from that danger; and not suffer thee to be perverted by the mouth of him that would subtly insinuate his lewd principles into thee.

Ver. 13. *Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness.*] Though thou shouldest be assaulted by many of them, thou shalt easily discover their folly, in leaving the straight, plain, and even paths of virtue, to walk blindly they know not whither, in the perplexed ways of vice and wickedness.

Ver. 14. *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked.*] Being so mad as to rejoice when they have done any mischief; and having no higher pleasure than to pervert others, and make them as bad as themselves.

Ver. 15. *Whose ways are crooked, and they forward in their paths.*] That is, to draw them aside, and entangle

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them in intricate ways, directly cross to their own interest, safety, and pleasure; for the whole course of their life is nothing else but a shameful contradiction to their soberest reason and best understanding.

Ver. 16. *To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*] But such is that sweet satisfaction which (as I said, ver. 10, 11.) thou wilt find in the affectionate love of true wisdom, that it will deliver thee, not only from the snares of wicked men, but, which is more dangerous, of a naughty woman: whose company (though so pernicious that God would have thee perfectly estranged from her, if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel, yet) hath powerful charms in it, to flatter thee into her embraces. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 17. *Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.*] Above all other, from that filthy adulteress, who is so lewd as to leave her husband (though a worthy and perhaps noble person), to whom she was joined in her youth, when love is in its greatest warmth, and took him for her guide and governor; but hath wickedly broken the laws of God, and violated the solemn vow of fidelity to him, which she made when they were married.

Ver. 18. *For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.*] The least degree of that discretion which wisdom infuses, will teach thee to avoid her society, who loves nobody, now that she hath forsaken him that had her first affection; but seeks the ruin of all that go to her house: where, by one means or other, they are in danger to meet with their grave, and be sent to keep company with those old giants, who corrupted mankind with such filthiness and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the earth, (Gen. vi. 4, 5. 11.) See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 19. *None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.*] And this is very remarkable, that it is rarely seen that any body who is drawn into her impure embraces ever gets out again: but she holds them all so fast by her enchantments, and they are so blinded and bewildered by her arts, that, like men who have quite lost their way in a strange country, they seldom or never can hit into it, and recover themselves to a virtuous way of living. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 20. *That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.*] In which the sincere love of wisdom (ver. 11, 12, &c.) will so secure thee; that escaping her snares, as well as those of wicked men, thou mayest imitate those excellent persons the patriarchs and prophets; and be preserved in the paths of those righteous men who have followed after them.

Ver. 21. *For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*] Which is as much as to say, that thou mayest be perfectly happy: for men of integrity (according to God's promise, Deut. xi. 8, 9. 21.) shall peaceably enjoy this good land which God hath given us; and they that study sincerely to please him in all things, shall leave it in possession to their posterity after them.

Ver. 22. *But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.*] But such impious men as I spoke of (according to what God himself hath also denounced, Deut. xi. 17. and other places) shall be cut down from the earth; where they may flourish, like a tree, for a time: nay, they that give themselves up to do wickedly, and keep no faith with God nor man, shall be plucked up, like a tree, by the very roots, and leave none to preserve their memory behind them.

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter he continues to press obedience to the precepts of wisdom; from the consideration of the benefits that are to be reaped thereby. Which he began to speak of in the foregoing chapter (touching also there, upon the mischiefs on the contrary side), but here handles more largely; and explains it not only in general, but in several particular precepts: for instance, *liberality to God's ministers,* ver. 9, 10. *patience in adversity,* ver. 11, 12. the foundation of which is *an entire trust in God, and his fidelity,* who will honour those that honour him, in his ministers; and never desert those in their trouble who do good when they are in their prosperity, ver. 5, 6.

After these things he returns to the general exhortation, ver. 13, &c. advising every one to learn the doctrine delivered by God, and to be obedient; and not to be so foolish as to prefer his own wisdom or craft before it. To which he adds promises and comminations, together with several advices; which I need not note particularly, because they lie plainly before their eyes who will read the chapter.

I shall only observe that he represents wisdom, [*a*] (ver. 16, 17, &c.) that is, religion and virtue, as other authors have done (particularly Cebes in his Tables), in the shape of a beautiful woman, or rather queen; with her arms extended, in the posture not only of directing, but also of rewarding her lovers and followers. For she holds forth in her *right hand* the great blessings of health and length of days, unto all those that will walk in the way to which she points. And it was but just to place this in her *right hand,* that is, to give it the precedence; because it was the chief promise of the law: and indeed the most desirable of all earthly blessings, without which nothing can be enjoyed; no, not ourselves.

And then, after this, follow wealth and reputation; things that mankind mightily covet: which he places in her *left hand;* as inferior blessings, but that come also from her gift.

And as for cheerfulness in all conditions, there are no pleasures, he affirms, like those which wait upon her, and attend her motions. Safe and secure pleasures; which do not merely gratify us for the present, and then expose us to danger, and leave us sad afterward; but give us a peaceable possession of perpetual joy, which never dies nor decays; but, like the *tree of life,* remains fresh for ever. This he proves, ver. 19, 20. and amplifies in the rest of the chapter.

[*b*] In which some observe three proverbial sayings: one ver. 8. which seems to be but a metaphorical representation of that firmness, that vigorous health, and cheerfulness of mind, which virtue imparts: the other in ver. 12. [*c*] *whom the Lord loveth he correcteth;* which Theodoret, upon Heb. xii. 6. calls indeed παροιμιακὴ παραίνεσις, a *proverbial admonition,* belonging to such parents, guardians, and masters, as are careful of those committed to their charge; but he names it so, I suppose, only because he found it in the book of the Proverbs. The last

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in ver. 18. [*d*] *tree of life:* which seems to be a proverbial speech (used afterward more than once in this book) for that which prolongs life; and makes it very delightful and pleasant, as well as firm and durable, if we understand it of Christ, the wisdom of God (as Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Austin, and others do), or of his doctrine, which is the same: it is literally true that he gives immortality, as the tree of life in Paradise would have done.

Ver. 1. *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.*] Let me then again entreat thee, whoever thou art that comest to learn of me (who loveth thee with a fatherly affection), not to be careless and negligent in the observance of these instructions; but remember them, and love them, and set thyself heartily to do whatsoever I command thee.

Ver. 2. *For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.*] For this is the surest way to that which all men naturally desire, and seek to attain: a long life, in firm health, vigour, and strength; with all manner of happiness and prosperity, (Deut. xxx. 18. 20.)

Ver. 3. *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.*] Of this thou canst not miss, if thou wilt be steadfastly good and just; for the infinite bounty of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, will secure these blessings to thee; therefore let my commandments be ever before thine eyes; fix them in thy memory and in thy affections, as if they were engraven upon thy heart; and look upon it as the greatest ornament to be obedient to them.

Ver. 4. *So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*] Which is as much, as if I had bidden thee acquire favour with God; and understand, on all occasions, what is good for thyself, ordering all thy affairs with such judgment and prudence, as to be in high esteem with him and with men.

Ver. 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thy own understanding.*] And assure thyself there is no rule of prudence like to this, to confide in God entirely; and to depend wholly on his providence for good success in well-doing: not imagining that, by thy own wit and policy, thou canst contrive such events as thou desirest, and bring about what thou designest.

Ver. 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*] No; in all thy undertakings, both private and public, be sensible of his overruling power; observe his laws; and implore his favour and blessing: and he shall guide thee in thy proceedings; and bring them to a happy issue, as he in his wisdom sees best for thee.

Ver. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.*] Never be guilty of such folly as to conceit thine own wit to be so great, that thou canst manage things thereby in thine own way (neglecting the rules that he hath prescribed thee) to thy satisfaction: but have a religious regard to him, who can either disappoint or prosper thee as he pleases; and, fearing to offend his majesty, avoid most cautiously those practices that he hath forbidden thee.

Ver. 8. *It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.*] This is the way to preserve a good habit both of soul and body: and in all conditions to remain undejected; nay, cheerful and fully satisfied, whatsoever happens. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 9. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.*] As, for example, there are those who think it prudence to save all they can; though it be by robbing God himself: but, if thou wilt be truly wise and happy, honour him in his ministers, by paying them their *tithes* duly; and bringing *oblations* to his house at the three solemn feasts; (Exod. xxiii. 14, 15.) together with the *first-fruits* of all that thy estate produces, (xxii. 29, 30.) in token of thy gratitude to him, and that all thou hast is his, and cannot thrive without his blessing.

Ver. 10. *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*] Which he will pour upon thee abundantly; and convince thee, by lading the earth with fruit, and sending a seasonable as well as plentiful harvest and vintage, that this is the way, not to diminish, but to increase the estate which God hath given thee. (Deut. xxviii. 4, 5. 2 Chron. xxxi. 10.)

Ver. 11. *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction.*] And suppose it be his pleasure that any affliction should befal thee; my son, (ver. 1.) let not that dissatisfy thee; nor make thee either doubt of his gracious providence over thee, or out of impatience take any unlawful course to remove it from thee.

Ver. 12. *For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*] But rather submit unto it, as a part of his fatherly discipline, which cannot hurt thee; but only correct something that is amiss in thee: for we are sure he loves those that keep his commandments; and therefore nothing that proceeds from his love ought to be despised, or received with an abject mind; but duly esteemed by them, and raise their expectation of some good from the affliction; which should no more make him suspected of any unkindness, than a tender parent is, when he whips the child in whom he delights; and to whom he wishes so well, that he will not let him be unchastised. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 13. *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.*] Happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man who attains to this degree of wisdom; and acquires (though it cost him the greatest pains and labour) such an understanding of God, and belief of his providence, as, notwithstanding any troubles that befal him, still to adhere unto him in faithful obedience, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 14. *For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver; and the gain thereof than fine gold.*] If it were to be bought for money, one would purchase it at any rate; for the profit of it is infinitely to be preferred before all the advantages that can be made by silver and gold.

Ver. 15. *She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.*] The most precious pearls are not so valuable; nor can our boundless fancy present any thing to our wishes that is worthy to come in competition with it.

Ver. 16. *Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left hand riches and honour.*] For true wisdom presents us, as we say, with both hands: teaching us, in the first place, such prudence and moderation, as by the Divine blessing prolong our days (which none of those things can do for us); and, in the next place, adds both riches and honour;

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which men foolishly and vainly seek to get, and to keep, by other means. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 17. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*] And, besides all this, there is a singular pleasure, nay, the highest delight, in all the acts of virtue to which wisdom directs her followers: who are always either in perfect safety by well-doing, or, if any trouble come upon them, have that inward tranquillity and satisfaction, which nothing else could give them.

Ver. 18. *She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.*] In short, wisdom leads into a paradise; and supplies the place of that tree of life, from whence our first parents were banished; that is, gives not only a present, but an immortal satisfaction, to all those that strongly apprehend and retain her precepts; and therefore I again pronounce him happy (ver. 13.) above all other men, and above all expression, who constantly and firmly adheres unto them. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 19. *The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.*] For they are a participation of that wonderful wisdom and understanding, whereby the Lord settled the earth in that place where it remains fixed; and disposed the heavenly bodies in that admirable and unchangeable order, which he would have us imitate.

Ver. 20. *By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.*] In works of mercy and goodness especially, whereby we plainly communicate with him in that knowledge, by which the Lord made fountains of water gush out of the earth for the use of all living creatures; and the clouds drop down plentifully their refreshing dews, for the cherishing of plants and grass, which in hot countries many times have no other moisture.

Ver. 21. *My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion.*] My son, (to whom my affection is so great, that I cannot but again repeat it, ver. 1. 11.) let me prevail with thee to fix these good instructions in thy mind: look upon them as the most solid wisdom, and the greatest cunning and policy; and accordingly observe them.

Ver. 22. *So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.*] For they will revive and cheer thee, when other things fail thee: and enable thee also with acceptable words to comfort those, whom the fame of thy wisdom shall invite to learn of thee.

Ver. 23. *Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.*] When thou goest abroad about thy business, thou shalt dispatch it the more cheerfully, because thou art sure of God's providence over thee: and wisdom will direct thee to avoid those stumbling-blocks, by which others fall into sin and danger.

Ver. 24. *When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*] And when thou comest home to rest from thy labours, thou shalt not be troubled with fear of what may happen whilst thou art asleep; but (having nothing to discompose thee) shalt lie down securely, and, by a sound and sweet repose, be refreshed to return to thy employments.

Ver. 25. *Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.*] In which, if thou shouldest be interrupted by any rumours and reports of unexpected and approaching danger, let not that disturb thee: no, though thou shouldest see the wicked ready to lay all waste, or the Divine vengeance bringing utter desolation upon them for their wickedness.

Ver. 26. *For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*] For a firm hope in the Lord shall be thy support, even when thou art in a tottering condition; nay, when thy skill quite fails thee, and thou knowest not what to do for thy safety; he shall so direct and guide thee, that thou shalt be preserved from falling into the hands of those that lie in wait to destroy thee.

Ver. 27. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*] And, as it will give thee great security of mind and confidence in God at such a time, not to be conscious to thyself of any wrong done to thy neighbour, by denying to pay thy just debts when thou art able; so the remembrance of having done good to others will be a far greater: and therefore let me advise thee to take a special care not to withhold relief from those whose needs entitle them unto it: when thou canst not pretend disability, but hast wherewithal to do it.

Ver. 28. *Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.*] And, as thou wouldest not have God to defer his help in such distresses as I spake of, (ver. 25, 26.) so do not thou put off thy neighbour, when he begs a kindness of thee, saying, I cannot now; come another time; to-morrow thou shalt see what I will do for thee: when, if thou hadst a heart to it, thou couldest supply him now, as well as then; and who can tell what shall be to-morrow?

Ver. 29. *Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.*] And let not the quietness of any man's temper, much less the confidence he hath of thy honesty and goodness, tempt thee to contrive any mischief to him: for the more securely he relies on thy virtue, and the less mistrust he hath of any harm from thee, the greater wickedness it will be, so much as to have it in thy thoughts to do him any injury.

Ver. 30. *Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.*] For instance, do not bring false actions against any neighbour, nor vex him with causeless or unnecessary suits at law: no, nor so much as pretend a cause for quarrelling and falling out with him, when he hath done nothing to deserve it of thee.

Ver. 31. *Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.*] And what though thou shouldest see men thrive by oppression and violence, let not that provoke thee to emulate them; that is, to wish thyself in their condition, by imitating them in any of their injurious proceedings.

Ver. 32. *For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous.*] For he that perversely departs from all the rules of truth and justice, is above all expression abominable to the Lord; even in his highest prosperity: but the Lord is a friend to men of sincere integrity; who know the secret of his providence in raising those wicked oppressors so high, that they may have the more dreadful fall.

Ver. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.*] The evildoer is under the curse of the Lord, though he live in the

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most stately palace: but just and good men ought to look upon themselves as under his care and blessing; and therefore very happy in the meanest cottage.

Ver. 34. *Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace to the lowly.*] Those proud oppressors and scoffers at good men, he will undoubtedly, not only confound, but expose to scorn, and make them ridiculous in the eyes of the world; but cause the humble, modest, and meek (who bear even their insolent scoffs patiently), to be had in honour and highly esteemed.

Ver. 35. *The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.*] They may be despised and debased for a time, but in the issue they shall be accounted the only wise men; and leave an excellent never-dying fame behind them; when those impious men shall be famous for nothing, but the shame and disgrace that shall fall upon them.

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

The dulness, sluggishness, and forgetfulness of mankind in their principal concernments are so notorious, that we need not wonder the wise man repeats the very same things, and quickens our attention to them, in the beginning of this chapter. Which he thought necessary to excite again (ver. 10.) and again, (ver. 20.) because all his pains he knew would be lost without serious consideration of what he said: and *the very first step to wisdom, is to have a mind to be wise.*

And to make his exhortations the more acceptable, he acquaints the reader with the lessons which his own father and mother were wont to teach him, (ver. 3, 4, &c.) and the great benefit he had received by them. Which gave him the greater confidence to press every one to follow his example of obsequiousness to good counsels, as the surest way to be happy: and by no means to imitate the examples of the wicked, from which he dissuades by many arguments, (ver. 14, 15, &c.) and beseeches they may be so duly pondered, (ver. 20, 21, &c.) that they produce in every one a watchfulness over his own heart, his mouth, his eyes, his feet: as may be seen in the conclusion of the chapter.

The whole chapter from ver. 4. may be conceived to be the words of David as well as Solomon's. But I have extended David's advice no farther than unto ver. 10. and there make Solomon to resume his exhortation; and urge upon his son what his father had taught him.

There is one proverbial speech in ver. 27. which needs no explication. Some would have another, ver. 16. but I can see no reason for it.

The principal instructions in this chapter are these: *the care that parents ought to take to instruct their children diligently;* and the greater they are (suppose princes) the more accurate ought their education to be, as Solomon's was: (ver. 3, 4, &c.) and above all things *the excellence of wisdom and virtue is to be inculcated:* for this excites a desire of it; and that is the very beginning of it, as some expound those words, ver. 7. In which sense they are admirably explained in the book of Wisdom, (vi. 12—14. 17.) Next to this they are to be *cautioned against evil company, as the bane of youth:* and the *wretchedness of their life that live wickedly* is to be represented; and *the happiness, comfort, and satisfaction, of theirs that live virtuously,* which increase as their days and their virtues do, (ver. 18.) Next they are to be taught how necessary it is to be *constant in reading pious books, especially the Holy Scriptures:* (ver. 21.) and *to have an upright heart,* sincerely disposed to follow such directions; upon which all depends, both their well or ill-doing, and their well or ill-being. *Watchfulness also over the senses* is commended, as of great use to preserve the affections from being corrupted.

Ver. 1. *HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.*] Listen then all ye that are desirous to learn, unto the instructions which, out of a paternal affection, I bring from God unto you: hearken to them, though they correct your present manners; and let your mind be so attentive, that you may know what it is to have a right understanding in all things.

Ver. 2. *For I give you good doctrine, forsake you not my law.*] They are no frivolous or indifferent matters which I teach you; but the most excellent things, and absolutely necessary to your happiness: therefore do not merely attend to them, but strictly observe my precepts, as the law and rule of your life.

Ver. 3. *For I was my father's son, and tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.*] Do as I myself did, who remember, that when I was a child, the son of a most wise and pious father, and under the careful eye of an affectionate mother; who loved me most dearly above all her children, and while I was soft and flexible, and apt to receive good impressions, looked to my education with great circumspection;

Ver. 4. *He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*] My father was wont to tutor and instruct me, (1 Chron. xxviii. 8. xxix. 2.) saying, Mind my words, and faithfully retain them, not only in thy memory, but in thy affections; observe my commandments, and thou shalt enjoy long happiness.

Ver. 5. *Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not: neither decline from the words of my mouth.*] And this is the thing I require of thee, not so much to seek after riches, as to treasure up wisdom; and endeavour to understand how to behave thyself upon all occasions; and when thou art well-informed in thy duty, do not forget it, nor turn aside from the way, into which I will direct thee.

Ver. 6. *Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.*] Quit all things in this world rather than forsake the precepts of wisdom; stick to them, and they will preserve thee from innumerable mischiefs: love them sincerely, and they will be stronger guard than money can procure thee.

Ver. 7. *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*] And as there is nothing comparable to wisdom, so the first step to it is to know as much, and to prize it accordingly. Begin therefore to be wise, by looking upon the fear of God as above all earthly possessions, and by being willing, if it were needful, to give all thou art worth to know what is pleasing to him.

Ver. 8. *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall*

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bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.] Thou canst not speak nor think too highly of this wisdom, as thou shalt find by happy experience. For if thou magnify it above all things, it will raise thy esteem, and make thee great in the world; yea, when thou entertainest it with ardent love, thou shalt become most illustrious in the sight of God and men.

Ver. 9. *She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.*] Whatsoever else thou hast to commend thee and gain thee honour, this shall add unto it, and make it far more amiable; the fairest ornaments, or the most beautiful crown that can be set upon thy head, shall receive lustre from hence; and be settled there the most securely.

Ver. 10. *Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings: and the years of thy life shall be many.*] Thus my father was wont to discourse to me, as I do to thee, my son; whom I earnestly again entreat (ver. 1.) to consider what I say, and to believe it; and then I promise thee, what he did me, (ver. 4.) that thou shalt lead a long and happy life.

Ver. 11. *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.*] I have already taught thee, and will still inform thee in the wisest course unto it; not in those crooked ways of fraud and falseness, &c. which many take; but in the direct paths of integrity and truth, in which I intend, as I have done hitherto, to lead thee.

Ver. 12. *When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.*] And if thy actions and designs have no other rule, thou shalt be at ease, and free from those straits and difficulties which others meet withal; and in case thy business shall require haste, this will be the safest, as well as the most inoffensive (if not the shortest), way to accomplish thy ends.

Ver. 13. *Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.*] Resolve to try it, and, though it should be contrary to thy present sense, yet do not refuse this instruction which I give thee; but take such fast hold of it, as never, for want of care and pains, to let it slip out of thy mind; keep it as a most precious treasure, for all thy happiness depends upon it.

Ver. 14. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.*] And if thou really intendest to be guided by me, remember the advice I gave thee in the beginning, (chap. i. 10.) not so much as to enter upon their wicked course of life, or to keep them company, who regard not God, and are injurious to men: or, if thou hast been seduced into it, be not persuaded by their seeming prosperity, and thriving condition, to continue in it.

Ver. 15. *Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*] Avoid it therefore with a just abhorrence; come not near it, but get as far as thou canst from their society: and decline all occasions that might invite thee into it, as dangerous temptations.

Ver. 16. *For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.*] For as mischief is their business, so they pursue it with a restless diligence: there being those among them, for instance, that cannot be quiet, nor have any satisfaction, till they have executed their villanous intentions; but perpetually disturb themselves, that they may ruin others.

Ver. 17. *For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.*] For they live by robbery and spoil; having no other meat and drink, but what is the fruit of their rapine and violence, and not of their honest labours.

Ver. 18. *But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*] Which makes a wide difference between them and righteous men; whose pure and innocent life is full of honour as well as joy; which increases continually together with their virtue; proceeding (like the splendour of the sun, which nothing can extinguish, nor hinder in its course) till come to the highest pitch of joy and glory.

Ver. 19. *The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.*] Whereas, those wicked people live most uncomfortably, as well as basely and vilely; going on blindly to their own destruction (of which they are in constant danger, and grows more and more upon them), and yet they know not (no more than men in thick darkness) what mischief it is that suddenly may befal them.

Ver. 20. *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*] Therefore I do, not without reason, once more repeat my request unto thee, (ver. 1. 10.) that thou wilt give diligent heed to my advice; and seriously consider those exhortations, which proceed from a sincere affection to thy welfare.

Ver. 21. *Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.*] Read them over and over again, and keep them perpetually in mind; or rather preserve them studiously, and lay them up, as a most precious treasure, in the closest affections of thy heart.

Ver. 22. *For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*] For they will make all those exceeding happy, both in body and soul, that come thoroughly acquainted with them: and, how various soever their temper and condition be, will prove an universal remedy for all their griefs and troubles.

Ver. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*] And charge thyself with this, above all other cares, to set such a strict guard upon the inward thoughts, motions, and affections of thy soul (which are besieged with many enemies), that thy consent be never obtained to any thing which thou oughtest to refuse: for thy living well or ill depends on this; and such as thy caution and watchfulness are in this, such will the actions of thy life be, which flow from thence.

Ver. 24. *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*] And as they that defend a city against an enemy set a strong guard at the gates and posterns, so do thou upon thy ears and upon thy mouth, never speaking things contrary to truth, honesty, and religion, thyself; nor listening unto those that do, but banishing both as far as is possible, from thy familiarity.

Ver. 25. *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*] The eyes also are dangerous inlets into the heart; and therefore watch them well that they do not gaze about, and fasten on every object that invites them: but be fixed upon one scope, as thy thoughts ought to be, from which let nothing divert them.

Ver. 26. *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.*] And before thou fixest and resolvest upon any action, examine and weigh it thoroughly, whether it be agreeable to the rule of life, and the end thou aimest at:

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and so thou shalt be constant to thyself, and confirmed in a steadfast course of well-doing.

Ver. 27. *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.*] From which do not suffer thyself to be drawn aside, either to superstition on the one hand, or to contempt or neglect of religion on the other: let neither love of friends, nor hatred of enemies, neither hope of pleasure and gain, nor fear of pain and damage, neither prosperous nor cross events, ever move thee to turn into either extreme from the rule of virtue: but, whatsoever inclination thou findest that way, do not proceed to commit the least sin against God, or against thy neighbour.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

There being nothing to which youth is so prone, as to give up themselves to satisfy their fleshly desires, and nothing proving so pernicious to them, if they do it with harlots; the wise man gives a new caution against those impure lusts, which he had taken notice of before, (chap. ii. 16, 17, &c.) as great obstructions to wisdom: and with repeated entreaties begs attention to so weighty an argument, which here he prosecutes more largely, and presses, not only with singular elegance, but with powerful reasons. Which, in the heat of youth, men are not forward to consider; but if they would be so sober, Solomon hath said enough to deter them from whoredom.

Whose miserable effects he describes by several apt resemblances, (ver. 4, 5.) which shew how, by this vice, men lose their honour, their time, their health, and estates; and at last (as he shews afterward) lie down in sorrow, and end their days in an unprofitable repentance. And therefore, for the prevention of this, he commends the use of marriage, and a passionate love for a man's own wife; which he describes allegorically: first [*a*], under the comparison of a *domestic fountain;* where a man may quench his natural thirst, and from whence *streams* (*i. e.* children) may be derived abroad to serve the public good, &c. and, secondly, under the comparison of a *young hind* and *a young wild goat:* which are taken notice of by authors that write of animals (particularly Oppianus) to be loving creatures; and which in ancient times were playfellows (as one may call them) for the greatest persons, who kept them in their palaces, and diverted themselves with them, as a lovely sort of creature, whom they delighted to adorn with chains, and garlands, and such-like things. About which Bochartus among others may be consulted: who hath demonstrated that the *jaalah* (which we translate a *roe*) is a creature that lived in mountainous places, and could climb up the steepest rocks. Unto which, as well as to a *young hind*, Solomon compares a good wife, because of the simplicity, softness, and good-nature of this kind of creature; and other qualities mentioned by ancient authors: who abundantly satisfy us, what reason the wise man had to make choice of these comparisons, to represent the pleasure of ardent love between man and wife, when it is natural without constraint; sincere, simple, gentle, without moroseness, suspicions, or pride: which good qualities are not to be found in harlots, but may be met withal in a wife. From whence he shews the unreasonableness, nay, unaccountable folly, of preferring fornication and vagrant lusts, before the innocent joys of a married life, (ver. 20.) to which a man, who considers his own good, would choose to be tied, that he may avoid the inconveniences, or rather miseries, to which the lusts of uncleanness reduce him: but especially the heavy judgment of God; who, having ordained marriage for the comfort of mankind, and the preserving society, (ver. 21, &c.) will not therefore let the contempt of it go unpunished.

The principal things to be learnt in this chapter are, not to believe every thing to be good for us that pleases the flesh for the present, (ver. 3, &c.) but in the beginning of any pleasure, to look to the end of it; to avoid the company of harlots; to use due care in the choice of a wife; to love her too much, rather than too little; to restrain ourselves from inordinate affection, by the consideration of God's omnipresence, &c.

The proverbial sayings are obvious enough in ver. 3, 4. 15. I shall only give an account of my translating עדה ver. 14. [*b*] the *assembly of judges:* for in many other places, besides those quoted there in the Paraphrase, it signifies the *seventy elders* or *senators* who judged the people: as in Josh. xx. 6. and Numb. xxvii. 21. where R. Solomon thus expounds בל העדה *all the congregation.* And so truly it seems plainly to be used Numb. xv. 24, &c. where the sacrifice is different from that prescribed in Lev. iv. 13, &c. and therefore the sin was different, and the *congregation* for whom this was offered, were *the representatives of the whole congregation;* or, as they now speak, the great Sanhedrin.

Ver. 1. *My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding.*] I cannot too often awaken thine attention, (whoever thou art that puttest thyself under my instruction; see chap. ii. 1. iii. 1. 21, &c.) especially in things of such moment as I am going to treat of: and therefore again I beseech thee, both to mind diligently, and to consider what I take to be true wisdom, and more than ordinary prudence.

Ver. 2. *That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.*] Which, if thou observest, it will make thee so skilful and discreetly cautious, that thou shalt not only be able to preserve thyself from the most subtle and dangerous deceits; but, upon occasion, to advise others, and keep them from being cheated.

Ver. 3. *For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.*] As too many are by the arts of a harlot, from whom thou oughtest to estrange thyself as much as if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel; for she pretending the greatest love, allures inexperienced youth by her flattering speeches, and sweet voice, perhaps, and songs, wherewith she enchants them; and making them believe they shall taste nothing but the most delicious pleasures, her soft and smooth enticements slip down glibly into their unwary hearts, which are taken with her.

Ver. 4. *But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*] But the beginning of this love is not so sweet, as the conclusion is bitter; and therefore think of both together, and believe what I now tell thee, without making a trial; that after a short pleasure follows long

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pain, by impairing men's health, strength, estates, and credit; which they cannot reflect upon without trouble and vexation, and (if she do not quite destroy their reason) be filled with remorse of conscience, and anguish of spirit: for, like a sword that cuts on both sides, she wounds both soul and body.

Ver. 5. *Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.*] In short, leads those that follow her to an untimely, shameful, and miserable end: to have never so little to do with her, is to approach to certain and inevitable destruction; not only here, but in another world.

Ver. 6. *Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.*] For though thou mayest think to make a retreat in time, thou wilt be deceived: she having more ways than thou canst ever know (winding and turning herself into a thousand shapes), to keep thee from so much as deliberating about thy return to a virtuous course of life.

Ver. 7. *Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.*] All which considered, should incline those that read these things to be obedient to me: who do not desire to restrain them from any thing that will make them happy; but in tender affection advise them, not to be enticed by her flatteries to depart from those fatherly counsels, which, out of mere kindness, I give unto them.

Ver. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.*] If all will not be governed by them, yet do thou, whose mind is awakened to attend unto me, wholly shun all familiarity with her; nay, so much as the least aspect towards her: avoid her as thou wouldest the plague; and be so far from going into her chamber, as not to come near the door of her house.

Ver. 9. *Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.*] Lest thou forfeit all the reputation, which perhaps thou hast got by worthy actions, and grow contemptible among thy friends and acquaintance; who see thee prefer the company of harlots, and their base attendants, before that of the most virtuous persons: and thereby thou lose, not only thy fame, but sacrifice the flower of thine age, and thy precious time, to one that doth not love thee a jot; but could see thee perish without any pity.

Ver. 10. *Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger.*] And that will be the issue of thy impurity; which wastes first the strength and vigour of thy body, and then thy money and estate, upon a strange family, perhaps of another country: whose filthy lusts are satiated at the expense of thy spirits; and whose house and table are furnished with the fruit of thy care and labours.

Ver. 11. *And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.*] And when things are come to this pass, that thy credit, thy friends, thy precious time, thy health, thy estate, and thy pleasure too are all gone, and nothing left but a heavy heart, and skin and bone; then thou begin unprofitably to groan and lament; nay, perhaps to roar out thy grief in a most deplorable manner.

Ver. 12. *And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof.*] Saying, How stupidly foolish have I been, in not considering all this sooner; how senselessly bent upon my own ruin. I am amazed to think how I hated the cautions that were given me to avoid her company; and inwardly despised (how civilly however in outward show I received them) the just reproofs I had afterward for going to her.

Ver. 13. *And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!*] I wanted no good instructions of my parents, tutors, friends, and God's ministers; who informed me of the danger, and taught me how to escape it: but, alas! I was so sottish as not to obey them; so contumacious, that I did not so much as consider what they said unto me.

Ver. 14. *I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.*] But gave up myself to follow my lusts, which in a short time engaged me in almost all kind of wickedness; from which the reverence of no persons could restrain me: but openly, in the face of the most public and solemn assemblies of God's people, even before the magistrates and judges, (Numb. xxv. 7. xxxv. 12.) I boldly committed them. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 15. *Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.*] Such are the fruitless moans of a man that hath quite exhausted himself in those lewd courses; which shew how much better it is to follow the advice which I now give thee: marry, and in a wife of thine own enjoy the pleasures thou desirest, and be content with them alone; innocent, chaste, and pure pleasures; as much different from the other as the clear waters of a wholesome fountain are from those of a dirty lake or puddle.

Ver. 16. *Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.*] Of whom thou mayest have a lawful issue, which thou needest not be ashamed to own; but openly produce and send them abroad, like streams from a spring, to serve the public good; nay, a numerous progeny may be derived from your happy society, and match into divers other honest families.

Ver. 17. *Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee.*] Children that acknowledge no other father, because they spring from one whom thou enjoyest (like a fountain in thy own ground) to thyself alone: being taught by thy confining thyself to her, never to admit any stranger to thy bed, but to keep it solely unto thee.

Ver. 18. *Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.*] Happy shalt thou every way be with such a wife; whom I advise thee to take in thy youth, and, avoiding those filthy cruel harlots, (ver. 9.) to solace thyself in her innocent and delightful company: whereby thou wilt long preserve thy youth, which they speedily deflower, (ver. 10.)

Ver. 19. *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*] Love her and cherish her, with a most tender affection; and let her always seem amiable in thy eyes: if thou wouldest recreate and disport thyself (as some are wont to do with young fawns, and other beautiful creatures of like kind), let it be with her, as the sweetest companion; in whose embraces take such satisfaction, as to forget all other, and to be excessively transported with her as long as you live. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 20. *And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?*] Consider, my son, (ver. 1.) what I say, and deny if thou canst, that it is an unaccountable folly to seek that in a

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vile harlot (to whom thou oughtest to be as great a stranger, as to her religion), which thou mayest more fully, more pleasantly, securely, and constantly, as well as more innocently, enjoy in a pious wife of thine own nation:

Ver. 21. *For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.*] And, which is most considerable, enjoy with the approbation and favour of the Lord: from whom no man can hide his private actions, but he plainly sees and weighs all he doth, wheresoever he be; and will exactly proportion rewards and punishments, according as he behaves himself.

Ver. 22. *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.*] If he be a wicked fornicator or adulterer, for instance, let him not think to escape, because he is so cunning that nobody observes him, or so powerful that none can call him to account: for his own manifold iniquities shall arrest and apprehend him; and he shall need no other chains to bind and hold him fast, to answer for them to God.

Ver. 23. *He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.*] Whose sentence upon such a person is this, that he shall inevitably perish, (ver. 5.) because he refused to follow these instructions; and not only miss of his aim of being happy, but, like men that wander from the right way, precipitate himself into unexpected ruin, (ver. 9—11.) because he was such an egregious fool, as to take no warning by all that could be said to him; but still to commit innumerable sins, (ver. 13, 14.) though he was told the many inconveniences, nay mischiefs, they would bring upon him.

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

For the securing of the peace and happiness of a married life (which the wise man had commended in the foregoing chapter), he here adds two cautions; one against *suretyship*, the other against *sloth:* which make great discontents in a family, by bringing it to poverty. He illustrates both by elegant similitudes; especially the latter, by the example of the ant: who borrows of none, and yet is not in danger to starve; laying up in store, by a notable industry, sufficient provision in due season against a time of need. Which the great Lord Bacon [*a*] ingeniously applies (in the beginning of his sixth book of the Advancement of Learning) to the improvement of arts and sciences, *by every one's bringing his grain.* And in this business he defines the slothful to be; *whose only care it is to live upon the main stock; but not to improve it by sowing the ground of sciences over again, and reaping a new harvest.* This is the sum of the eleven first verses.

And upon this occasion he annexes the description of a deceitful knave, (ver. 12, &c.) who cares not by what wicked arts he lives, when he is reduced to poverty: whose character he gives from his mouth, his eyes, feet, fingers, heart, and tongue. And after a septenary of vices, (ver. 16, &c.) which he represents as most odious to God, he returns to his former argument, to give cautions against uncleanness, especially adultery, (ver. 20. 24, &c.) which, as it is many times the effect of idleness, so he shews is the way to bring one to poverty; nay, to endanger one's life, or to bring inevitably upon him some other mischief; not only infamy, but the hatred and revenge of that person who is wronged by the adulterer; who hereby puts himself into a worse condition than that of a thief. [*b*] They that would see the terrible effects of this jealousy fully and livelily described, let them read St. Chrysostom, περὶ Παρθενίας, chap. lii. where he observes, among other things, that οὐ τὴν ἀθυμίαν μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ θυμὸν, &c. *this disease is wont to breed and bring forth, not only an intolerable heaviness of mind, but an insupportable rage;* and that such is the madness of this distemper, that it is not cured, no, not by the revenge it takes upon him that is the cause of it.

The principal points of wisdom to be learnt in this chapter are these; care of our family; caution in engaging for others; diligence in some honest employment; hatred of idleness, as contrary to nature; not to contemn the meanest instructor, but to learn something even of the smallest creature; and to improve the present time; to dread the mischievous effects of poverty, especially that which comes by idleness; (the effect of which is too oft the loss of all conscience, ver. 12, 13, &c.) to give good heed to the admonitions of our parents and instructors, when they teach the will of God: and above all things, to fortify ourselves against the sins of uncleanness. About which the wise man gives the more frequent cautions, because youth is not more prone to them, than they are pernicious to youth: who ought therefore not only to weigh diligently the miserable consequences of them, especially of adultery (which he represents in the conclusion of the chapter), but carefully to avoid the occasions of such sins; and faithfully to suppress the first motions towards them, ver. 25, &c. [*c*] where he gives a particular charge to watch over our eyes (which are the inlets to love), and uses a remarkable phrase to express the danger of gazing upon an evil woman; lest he be *taken* or *caught* with her eyelids: which he seems to compare to *nets*, as other authors do: particularly Philostratus in his Epistles; where he often speaks of the τὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων δίκτυα, *nets of the eyes;* and hath in these elegant words expressed the power of love which resides in the *eyelids*, here mentioned: ὁ Ἔρως τὴν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀκρόπολιν, οὐ ξύλοις οὐδὲ πλίνθοις, ἀλλὰ μόνοις βλεφάροις τειχίσας, ἡσυχῇ κατὰ μικρὸν εἰσδύεται, &c. Epist. Γυναικί.

It would be too long to note the *proverbial* speeches in this chapter. I shall only give a brief account of them, and of one phrase in this chapter that needs a little explication.

[*d*] As for the proverbial speech, it is ver. 11. upon which the Lord Bacon hath made a very ingenious observation; distinguishing in this manner, between the poverty that comes as a traveller, and the want that comes as an armed man: that the "shipwreck of fortune falls upon prodigals, or such as are careless of their estates, by insensible degrees of the first: with soft silent paces, like a traveller, and is hardly perceived: but soon after necessity invades him, like an armed man; that is, presses upon him so hard, that he feels it plainly, and perceives there is no resistance to be made." And thereupon he gives this prudent advice, to "prevent the traveller, and to be well provided against the armed man." But it is sufficient to have noted this here, (out of his eighth book

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of the Advancement of Learning, chap. 2. parab. 5.) which they that please may make use of upon occasion. In my Paraphrase I have waived this exact curiosity; because I observe the wise man generally repeats the same thing, in other words, without any such distinction.

[*e*] As for the phrase I spoke of, it is ver. 31. where it is said a thief shall *restore sevenfold* (as we translate the word), when the law of Moses enjoins no such restitution, but much less, (Exod. xxii. 1. 4.) and there is no reason to think the law was altered in aftertimes. Therefore I have followed another use of the word *schivatajim*, which signifies not any determinate number, but only such as is perfect and complete in its kind; as may be seen Gen. iv. 15. 24. Psal. xii. 7. Isa. xxx. 26.

Ver. 1. *MY son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger.*] And now, my son, (see chap. ii. 1. iii. 1. 17.) that no difference may arise between thy wife and thee; be advised by me not to pass thy word rashly for the money which thy neighbour or friend borroweth of another; much less stand bound for a stranger, whose honesty or ability is unknown to thee.

Ver. 2. *Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.*] Young men, indeed, think this no great matter; but if thou hast been so incautious as to be drawn into such engagements, look upon thyself as no longer a free man, but hampered and enslaved in dangerous obligations.

Ver. 3. *Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.*] And therefore, in that case, immediately follow the counsel which I now give thee, my son: do thy utmost endeavour to be discharged, by pressing thy friend forthwith to satisfy the debt, or to give thee security against the creditor: make no delay, and stick not, if need be, to cast down thyself before him on the ground, and beseech him as readily to grant thy request, as thou wast forward to comply with his: be not modest at all; nor cease to urge and importune him, by thyself and by thy friends, till thou hast prevailed with him.

Ver. 4. *Give not sleep to thy eyes, nor slumber to thy eyelids.*] Be not quiet till this be accomplished; nor take so much as a wink of sleep till thou art eased of this care: which, if thou understandest thyself, may well disturb thy rest.

Ver. 5. *Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.*] For thou art in the same condition with a young roe, or silly bird, that is taken in the toil of the hunter, or the snare of the fowler; and therefore struggle, like them, with all thy might, to get loose (if it be possible), and to be released from the bond wherein thou art entangled.

Ver. 6. *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.*] Nor are industry and diligence requisite in this alone, but in all thy affairs; to which, therefore, if thou art slothful, I must excite thee by the example of the ants, whose orderly and unanimous diligence, in collecting and preserving food for themselves, if thou wilt mark and observe, thou mayest be ashamed to be an idle spectator of their labours; and learn hereafter to imitate their provident care. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 7. *Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler.*] Which is the more remarkable, because they have none to lead and direct them (as mankind have), no overseer to exact their labours; no supreme governor to call them to an account for any negligence.

Ver. 8. *Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*] And yet they never omit the opportunity they have in harvest, to make provision against the winter; but toil perpetually in gathering, and carrying food into the cells they have digged for it in the earth; where they lay it up and secure it with admirable art; that it may neither be injured by the weather, nor stolen from them by other creatures.

Ver. 9. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?*] O the strange idleness of mankind! who have many monitors and governors, that call upon them again and again, and stir them up in vain to labour. What wretchlessness is this, which makes thee, O sluggard, indulge thyself in laziness and sloth? as if thou wert made for nothing else but to sleep and take thine ease!

Ver. 10. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.*] Rolling thyself in thy bed, and ridiculously desiring thy pains may be spared, and thou mayest be suffered still, without any disturbance, to enjoy a little more sleep; when thou hast loitered too long, and put off the care of thy affairs from time to time, till thou hast none left to do it in.

Ver. 11. *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*] But poverty comes apace upon thee, and before thou art aware leaves thee as naked as if thou wert stripped by a highwayman: nay, extreme want seizes on thee unavoidably, like an armed man, which thou canst find no means to resist. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 12. *A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.*] By which means thou mayest be tempted to become the worst of men, a perfect shark, void of all faith and honesty; whose mouth never speaks a word of truth; but makes it his business, by lies, or flatteries, or slanders, or perjuries, to maintain himself in his idle courses.

Ver. 13. *He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.*] His very eyes are instruments of deceit or mischief; for he makes signs with them to his companions, when they are to play their pranks: or if that be too broad, he secretly treads upon their toes, or signifies his mind by the motion of his fingers; for every part of him is employed to make his wicked meaning understood.

Ver. 14. *Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.*] How should it be otherwise, when his heart is a shop, furnished with nothing but all manner of perverse inclinations? which are perpetually at work to contrive some mischief or other: and (if they can do nothing else) by casting suspicions into men's minds one of another, to stir up hatred, dissension, strife, brawlings, law-suits, and all manner of discord; which is the destruction of families and kingdoms.

Ver. 15. *Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.*] And shall prove his own utter ruin: which, for this very cause, shall, sooner than he thinks of, in a terrible manner, come upon him; when he fancies he hath carried his matters so cun-

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ningly, that nobody discerns his villany, he shall on a sudden be looked upon as the worst of mankind, and, like a vessel broken into little bits, be incurably undone.

Ver. 16. *These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him.*] For, among offences of this kind, nothing is more odious to the Lord (who is the dispenser of rewards and punishments), nothing more opposite to the Divine nature, and which he more severely punishes, than these six or seven things; which are commonly found in loose companions, such as I have now described:

Ver. 17. *A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.*] First, pride and haughtiness of spirit; which swelling a man with a vain opinion of himself, makes him contemn all others, and overlook them as below his notice. Secondly, falsehood or treachery; which stick not at any lies, or flatteries, or calumnies. And, thirdly, a violent, cruel disposition; which makes a man rather imbrue his hands in the blood even of an innocent person, than not have him removed, who stands in the way of his designs.

Ver. 18. *A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.*] To which add the fountain of all these, and of those that follow; a mind that studies nothing but how, by fraud or force (though never so injurious to others), to satisfy some desire of pleasure, covetousness, or revenge: which produces three other abominable vices. First, forwardness to execute such mischievous intentions and desires cheerfully, without any check or delay:

Ver. 19. *A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.*] Secondly, an atheistical impudence, which makes a man in open court (when he is upon his oath) testify any falsehood against his neighbour; and lastly, such malicious envy, as loves to make the dearest friends fall out; and takes pleasure to see those at variance, who ought to be most closely united in brotherly affection.

Ver. 20. *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.*] And here, my son, I must remember thee of what I said in the beginning, (chap. i. 8.) about a reverend regard unto thy parents; especially when they warn thee against such wickednesses as these: do not make light of their admonitions; but observe the precepts of thy father, and let thy mother's commands be a law to thee. (See chap. i. 8.)

Ver. 21. *Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.*] Fix them in thy mind, and link thy affections so fast to them, that they may not only be continually before thine eyes; but seem the greatest ornament to all thy words and actions, when they are ordered by their directions.

Ver. 22. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.*] Thou wilt find the benefit of giving early entertainment to such good counsel from thy parents, in every passage of thy whole life: for when thou goest about any business, it will guide thee to do it honestly and successfully; when thou liest down to sleep, it will make thee rest secure of the guardianship of the Divine Providence over thee; and when thou awakest in the morning, suggest to thy thoughts how thou oughtest to behave thyself at home and abroad.

Ver. 23. *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the ways of life.*] In the darkest times, and the most dubious cases, it will both direct and comfort thee; for every particular commandment of God (which they teach thee) is like a candle; and the whole law is like the light of the sun; to shew thee thy way, and to exhilarate thy spirits, while thou walkest in it: nay, the severest reproofs, which correct thy errors, and reduce thee to obedience, are the way to the greatest happiness.

Ver. 24. *To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.*] As those instructions and reproofs, for instance, out to be accounted, which preserve thee from being deluded by the flattering speeches and enticements of a lewd woman; from whom thou oughtest perfectly to estrange thyself, as from a sink of all wickedness.

Ver. 25. *Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.*] Let me advise thee again (though I have done it oft, ii. 16. v. 3, 4, &c.) not to gaze upon her beauty, or upon her fine attire; but suppress the very first desire, which a glance of her may have kindled in thy heart: do not consent to pursue it in the least; much less suffer thyself to be caught in the nets of her wanton eyes, and thereby drawn into her dangerous embraces. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 26. *For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.*] For such is the cunning of a harlot, that having got a silly youth into her toils, she will hardly let him go, till she have reduced him to the extremest beggary; and if she be another man's wife, a train is laid for that which is more precious by far than all the treasures he hath spent, *viz.* his dearest life; which he foolishly loses for the short pleasure of a sinful lust.

Ver. 27. *Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?*] He may think, perhaps, to enjoy his pleasure so privately, that none shall know it; but that is as unlikely, as that a man should take fire secretly into his bosom, and so conceal it that it shall not break out and burn his clothes.

Ver. 28. *Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?*] Who ever heard that fire will do no hurt, because it is closely lodged? or that any body ever walked barefoot upon red-hot coals, and his feet escaped from being burnt?

Ver. 29. *So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.*] Even so it is sottish folly to imagine that a man shall suffer nothing, who lies with his neighbour's wife: let him be who he will that commits that crime, he shall not escape unpunished.

Ver. 30. *Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.*] For he is not a common thief, who only steals a man's goods, and that perhaps out of extreme necessity, merely to satisfy his hungry appetite, which he knows not otherways how to fill: such a one we are apt to pity, and do not expose him to shame, by whipping him, and laying stripes upon his back;

Ver. 31. *But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.*] But when he is found out, he shall only make as complete a restitution (Psal. lxxix. 12.) as the law requires, (Exod. xxii. 1, &c.) though that perhaps may be no less than all that he is worth. See Arg. [e]

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Ver. 32. *But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.*] But the adulterer robs a man of his wife, without any such necessity, there being other and honest ways to satisfy his desires; and therefore, hath no excuse, but must be looked upon as a stupid fool, void of common understanding; and when he is found out, be punished, not merely in his estate, but with the loss of his life, (Lev. xx. 10.)

Ver. 33. *A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*] And besides the quarrels and other troubles wherein this sin may engage him, his reputation shall receive a deadly wound; and it will make him infamous as long as he lives, and when he is dead; for while his name lasts, it shall not be mentioned without reproach; but have a brand of disgrace set upon it, which shall never be blotted out.

Ver. 34. *For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*] For no restitution can be made, nor satisfaction given, in this case, as there may be in the other; no prayers neither, nor submissions, shall prevail with the injured husband; whose justly-provoked indignation rises up to a furious rage; which will not pity or spare the adulterer (though the public justice should be asleep), when he finds an opportunity to be revenged. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 35. *He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.*] Though he may be willing to expiate his crime, and redeem his life at any rate, it will not be accepted; the largest gifts will be refused; and though greater and greater be still offered, they will not appease his wrath: which pursues the adulterer implacably, and never rests contented but in his utter ruin.

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

Chastity is a virtue of that consequence, and impurity such a pernicious bane of youth, that the wise man thought he could not too often make mention of the danger of the one, to move men carefully to preserve the other. And therefore is not contented with what he had already said about this matter, in the latter end of the second chapter, and in the whole fifth chapter, and now in the latter part of the sixth; but again repeats it with renewed importunities; desiring to be heard attentively, especially in the cautions he gives against *adultery;* the avoiding of which he represents as a high point of wisdom, (ver. 1—4.)

And the better to secure those that desire to be happy from this snare, he represents, together with the silliness of young men, the cunning and crafty devices of an impudent adulteress: Which is admirably set forth from ver. 6. to ver. 21. where he begins to shew the effects of her courtship, and its lamentable conclusion. And thereupon (ver. 24.) renews his entreaties to beware of such women; who have undone many and great persons; and to stop at the very first motion or inclination towards her.

The sum of all is, that it is a *singular benefit* a man hath by true wisdom, to be preserved from such sins and such miseries: and therefore we should *study wisdom;* which alone can secure us from being deceived by such flatteries, as bewitch silly and incautious souls to their ruin. And herein the *vigilance of magistrates* is required to watch and observe (as Solomon did, ver. 6, 7.) the manner of their subjects; that may the better obviate and correct their vices: but especially *every man's diligent consideration* is necessary, of such things as Solomon here sets before him, to divert him from such wicked courses. Particularly the *character of these lewd women is to be studied;* who are then most abominable, when they put on the mask of piety and devotion. As this strumpet doth (ver. 14.) in her speech which she makes to the young man; where there are two things in my Paraphrase, of which I owe some account to the reader.

[*a*] The one is in the beginning of it, (ver. 14.) Where I have taken *schelamin*, peace-offerings, of which there were three sorts, (Lev. vii. 11, 12. 16.) for the last of them, offerings of *thanksgiving* for blessings already obtained; not of *prayer* for the impetration of blessings from God (as Grotius and others understand the word) not yet received: my reason is, because she was so solicitous to have company at her feast upon this sacrifice that very day. Every body knows that such sacrifices were to be of the best, either of *bullocks*, or *sheep*, or *goats*, (Lev. iii. 1. 6. 12.) and that the greatest part of them fell to the share of the person who offered them, that he might feast with God: that is, all except the fat upon the kidneys, and rump of the sheep, and the breast and right shoulder; which was sufficient to make a liberal entertainment for his friends. But this is not so commonly observed, that though they might keep this flesh two days, before it was all spent, because there was such plenty of it, yet that is to be understood only of the two first sorts of peace-offerings, for obtaining blessings; not of the *eucharistical*, or thank-offerings: which, as Philo observes, were to be eaten the very same day they were offered: "that they who had readily received favours from God, might as readily, and without delay, communicate to others." Which is the account Abarbinel also gives of this matter: and it is observable, that all sorts of bread were to be joined with this sacrifice, that every thing might be ready for the feast.

[*b*] The other thing is at the latter end of her speech, (ver. 20.) where by the word *haccese* I understand the *full moon*, as the Vulgar Latin doth. With which translation interpreters find fault, because it looks like a contradiction, they say, to call that day by a name, which signifies the moon *to be covered:* and therefore they translate it rather the *new moon*, as we do in the margin of our Bibles. But they that can consult Lud. de Dieu upon Psal. lxxxi. 3. will find good reason to take it quite otherwise; for the *full moon*, which giving light then all the night, made it a fit time for a journey, either in winter (as by the darkness of the night, ver. 9. I suppose it might now be) when the days are short: or in summer when the heat made them unfit for travel.

The proverbial sayings in this chapter, some make three, others four; all contained in two verses, 22, 23. With which I shall not trouble the reader; because I have made them plain enough in the Paraphrase; and

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intend not to fill this book with like sayings out of other authors.

[c] I should only add, that *rabbim* in the last verse but one, signifying *great* men as well as *many*, I have expressed both: and Solomon himself, as well as Samson, became an example of the *mighty men* there mentioned, who were undone by lewd women.

Ver. 1. *My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.*] There is great reason then, my son, (Prov. ii. 1.) to repeat the caution I have often given thee, against this and other vices: and to beseech thee to observe my instructions, and to lay up my commandments in such faithful remembrance, that they may not fail to produce the fruit of obedience.

Ver. 2. *Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.*] For if thou wilt be ruled by them, assure thyself (as I have said before, iv. 4.) thou shalt enjoy long happiness: therefore observe them carefully with a tender affection to them; and, looking upon them as thy safest guide and director, consent as soon to wound the apple of thine eye, as in the least to violate any of my laws.

Ver. 3. *Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.*] Do not merely read what I write, imagining thou canst have continual recourse to them here in this book; but be so well acquainted with them, as to have them (as we speak) at thy fingers' ends: or rather, let them be transcribed from hence into thy very heart.

Ver. 4. *Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.*] There embrace them with ardent love; and set such a high esteem on wisdom, that thou mayest invite it more and more unto thee; till it be as familiar with thee as an only sister, born at the same time with thee; and thou understand and delight in all her precepts, as so near akin to thee, that thou find them to be the very reason and sense of thy own mind.

Ver. 5. *That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*] Which will be a powerful preservative to thee from the snares of the naughty woman: who, though her company be so pernicious, that God would have thee perfectly estranged from her, as if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel, yet hath powerful charms about her, to flatter those into her embraces, who are not heartily in love with wisdom.

Ver. 6. *For at the window of my house I looked through my casement.*] Of which a memorable instance comes now into my mind; for looking one day from my chamber, through the lattices of the window of my palace;

Ver. 7. *And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding.*] I observed, among the undisciplined and unexperienced striplings of the city, one that was as childish and void of consideration, as he was youthful and eager in his desires:

Ver. 8. *Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house.*] Who, as if he had a mind to be undone, passed idly through the street, till he came to a corner, where naughty women use to haunt: walking in as stately a manner as he could devise, directly towards one of their houses.

Ver. 9. *In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.*] It was in the twilight, while he might see his way, and yet hope to be concealed: in the close of the day; which was followed by a night as dark as pitch, and fit for such works of darkness.

Ver. 10. *And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart.*] There, on a sudden, I was surprised with the sight of a woman starting forth; who did not stay till he came up to her, but went to meet him in a gaudy lascivious dress, apt to allure a weak young man: who thought presently she was in love with him; when her heart, as full of subtilty as his was of folly, is reserved only to herself.

Ver. 11. *(She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house.*] This is her character: she is full of talk, and of bold unseemly courtship; unruly, and not to be controlled or broke of her will; idle also, and always gadding abroad, as if she had no business (but with her foolish lovers) at home.

Ver. 12. *Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)*] Sometimes she stands before her door; and, if that will not do, she goes farther into the streets and places of greatest concourse: and, more especially, waits at every corner (where she may look into two streets at once) to ensnare such as are apt, like silly birds, to be taken by her.

Ver. 13. *So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him.*] At one of those corners (as I said) she met this young fool; and, contrary to all the rules of modesty, caught him hard about the neck and kissed him: and after these amorous caresses put on still a bolder face, and, without any blushing, made this following speech to him:

Ver. 14. *I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows.*] I am a happy woman, in many blessings that God hath bestowed upon me, for which I have given him solemn thanks this very day: and, as religion and custom bid me, I have provided as good a feast as those sacrifices would afford, which I formerly vowed, and now have paid; having no want of any thing, but of some good company at home to rejoice with me. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 15. *Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face; and I have found thee.*] Which made me go abroad to try if I could meet with thee (who art the very person whom I came to seek), that I might invite and earnestly beseech thee to be so kind as to bear me company: and, to my great joy, this is added to all my other happiness, that I have found thee speedily and most opportunely.

Ver. 16. *I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.*] There shall no other pleasures be wanting when our feast is done; but from the table we will remove to my bed; which I have richly adorned with every thing that may please the eye; and made it as soft also as heart can wish.

Ver. 17. *I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.*] Where thou shalt be entertained likewise with the sweetest perfumes, that ours or the neighbouring countries could furnish me withal; such as myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon; wherewith I have sprinkled my bed, to render it more grateful to all thy senses.

Ver. 18. *Come let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves.*] Why do we waste

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our time then here in the street? come along with me, and let us go thither; and there satisfy our desires to the full with love: we will solace ourselves with the sweetest pleasures; which shall not end till the morning-light.

Ver. 19. *For the good man is not at home, he is gone a long journey.*] For there is no fear we shall be interrupted or disturbed; the man (whom they call my husband) being from home, and not likely to return in haste: for he is gone to a place a great way off.

Ver. 20. *He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.*] Where he hath much business to dispatch; which will detain him so long, that I am sure it will be full moon (and now the new doth scarce yet appear, ver. 9.) before he can be at home again. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 21. *With much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.*] In the representing of these, and many other like specious pretences (of great affection to him, of all sorts of pleasure, of secrecy, and safety in their enjoyments), she shewed herself such a mistress of her art, that she bowed the heart of the young man to become her disciple: and, having wrought upon his inclinations, she pursued her advantage with so much cunning, that she rather compelled than attracted him, by her charming voice, and her soft alluring language.

Ver. 22. *He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.*] For he made not the least objection, but away he went immediately, and followed her like a great calf (as we speak in our language), or a stupid ox; that fancies he is led to the pasture, when he is going to be killed; or like a fool, who takes it for an ornament, when the stocks are brought for his correction, to be clapped upon his legs.

Ver. 23. *Till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.*] Just so he hastily threw himself into her embraces, and dreamt of nothing but pleasure; till, like a rash soldier that falls unexpectedly into an ambush, he received a mortal wound by that which he fancied would be his highest satisfaction; or like a silly bird, that, greedy of the food which is laid to entice it, never minds the snare that is laid together with it: so he, eagerly longing to taste of her feast and the following delights, had not so much as a thought that this was a design upon his life; and would not end, but in miseries infinitely greater than all his joys.

Ver. 24. *Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.*] This is a true representation, my dear children (whom I love unfeignedly, not deceitfully, like those harlots), of the folly and danger of these lewd courses, in which youth is prone to be engaged: and therefore do not look upon it as an idle speculation; but give diligent heed unto it, and be ruled by my advice.

Ver. 25. *Let thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.*] Let not one of you so much as entertain a thought of going to such a woman, much less of consenting to her enticements: or, if any of you have been so unhappy as to be engaged in her company, let him think it is too much that he hath adventured to turn aside out of the right way, and not wander till he hath utterly lost himself in those strange paths, and cannot find his way back again.

Ver. 26. *For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.*] Do not presume of being safe in such courses, and of making a good retreat at last: for many have been the examples, of no mean persons, who have fallen in their reputation, their estates, their healths, their comforts of life, and in truth have utterly perished by her: innumerable are the mighty men, both for valour and for wisdom, whom she hath brought to ruin. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 27. *Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*] In short, to follow her unto her house, as this young man did, is the direct way to hell: every step that is taken to her bed (unto which she invited him to ascend), is, in truth, a going down to the dismal chambers of death, and to the most horrid miseries.

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The folly and danger of yielding to those brutish lusts and affections, whereby so many are misled, having been plainly discovered and livelily described in the foregoing chapter; the wise man proceeds in his design, by appealing to all that read these things, whether they be not sufficiently cautioned against those courses which ruin them; and abundant care be not taken to make them really wise and happy. For he knew none could answer those questions negatively which he asks in the beginning of the chapter, (ver. 1, 2, &c.) but all must confess they have been informed in the doctrine of wisdom. Whom he represents as present every where, and commending itself to all sorts of persons with a sincere affection, (ver. 6, &c.) as infinitely better than all the treasures which they greedily seek, (ver. 10.) and to be desired and valued upon so many accounts, that it is not easy to number them. Particularly for that prudence and that authority, which it gives to those who are endued with it, (ver. 12. 14, 15, &c.) and more than this, because it makes them approach near unto God, the fountain of wisdom and goodness, and the original pattern of them, (ver. 21, 22, &c.)

This is expressed in such magnificent language, that, though Solomon, I suppose, thought of nothing but the wise directions God had given them in his word, revealed to them by his servant Moses and the prophets; yet the ancient Christians thought his words might better be applied to the wisdom revealed unto us in the gospel by the Son of God; nay, to the Son of God himself, the eternal Word, and wisdom of the Father.

[*a*] Whom the Arians, by a false interpretation of a passage in this chapter, (ver. 22.) endeavour to prove a creature: but, according to the Hebrew verity, if this text belong to that matter, appears to have been, as St. John speaks, *with the Father in the beginning*, being his only begotten before all worlds. And so the word קנה which we translate *possess*, sometimes signifies in Scripture; and, as it is thus rendered by the LXX. in Zech. xiii. 5. so ought it to be translated in Gen. iv. 1. (not *I have gotten*, or *possessed*, but) *I have brought forth* a man from the Lord: as Bochartus discourses in his Phaleg. p. 784.

But I said, *if it belong to that matter*, because the fathers themselves are not resolved, whether these words (ver. 22.) may not rather be applied to our blessed Saviour,

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according to his human nature. For so the great Athanasius himself sometimes expounds them (though at other times he goes the other way), allowing the Arian sense of ἔκτισε, *he created me;* this is not to be understood (saith he, in his Expositio Fidei, tom. i. p. 242.) of the Divinity of Christ; "but σωματικῶς εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν γέγραπται, *is written of Jesus bodily,* as he was born of the Virgin Mary. For of this Κυριακὸς ἄνθρωπος (as he speaks), whom he sent for our salvation, it may be said truly, that he was *the beginning of God's ways:* we have access by him to God the Father, as he himself saith, *I am the way,* which leads to the Father." And afterward, in his epistle about the decrees of the Nicene council, (p. 262.) he glosses upon these words in this manner; "The person who here speaks is, indeed, our Saviour, who is to be conceived to say this when he took a body, *the Lord created me in the beginning of his ways.* For as, with respect to his being the Son of God, it is most agreeable to say, *he was always, and in the bosom of the Father:* so, being made a man, this saying was very becoming, *the Lord created me.*" And, to name no more places, he interprets it thus several times, in his third oration against the Arians, (p. 415. 417, &c.) where he hath these words: "It is as if he had said, My Father made me a body, and created me to be among men for their salvation."

But this not being the sense of the words which Solomon first intended, I shall not build my Paraphrase upon it; but take *wisdom* here, as it signifies in other places of this book, and hath been hitherto described. Whom Solomon now celebrates for her most venerable antiquity, (as Aristobulus observes to Ptolemy, in Eusebius's Præpar. Evang. lib. xiii. p. 667.) and introduces, like a most beautiful person, no less than a queen; or rather some Divine being (infinitely to be preferred before that base strumpet spoken of in the foregoing chapter). Who having finished her own praises, which, the truth is, better agree to that heavenly doctrine afterward delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ (who was the wisdom of the Father, both as the eternal ΛΟΓΟΣ subsisting with him before all worlds; and as he was anointed by the Holy Ghost to declare to us all the counsel of God), concludes with an earnest invitation unto all to become acquainted with her instructions, if they meant to be happy, and would avoid the greatest miseries, (ver. 32, 33, &c.)

There are so many notable lessons to be learnt out of this chapter, that it would make this preface too long, if I should mention them all. I shall therefore name only *one doctrinal point;* that if this chapter be at all to be understood of the Divinity of the Son of God (which the Arians believed), then both his *eternity* is most plainly here asserted, and also his distinct *subsistence* and personality, as we speak, (ver. 22. 30.) And these *two practical:* first, that it *is a vain pretence we make to wisdom, if the fear of God and true virtue be wanting;* (ver. 13. 20.) and, secondly, the whole chapter supposes what the last verse more particularly expresses, that *every man's death and destruction are from himself;* who wrongs his own soul; and that against the desire and earnest frequent importunities of the wisdom of God: unto which he will not hearken; but perversely rejects the seasonable reproofs and the wholesome advices, which, on many occasions, he meets withal, to prevent his ruin.

They that follow the Vulgar Latin fancy they find a proverbial saying, ver. 13. where that which we translate a *froward mouth,* they translate a *mouth with two tongues:* but I have followed the Hebrew, which speaks of a worse sort of perverse language than that phrase alone signifies.

Ver. 1. *DOTH not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?*] Can you then hereafter pretend ignorance, and say you never had any caution given you against these snares? Or rather, have I not the greatest reason to chide you for your stupidity in hearkening unto those secret allurements to the deeds of darkness, when their shamefulness is so apparent? and you have had so many open and loud admonitions given you to be wiser; and such serious and earnest endeavours have been used, by repeated instructions and reproofs, to reclaim you from your folly?

Ver. 2. *She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.*] There is no public crier better heard and understood by all, when from a high place he makes proclamation to the people, than the rules of wisdom and virtue are: which do not lie concealed, nor can be altered at our pleasure; but present themselves continually to men's thoughts wheresoever they go, being as plain as the highway, and remaining unmoveable and fixed notwithstanding all the attempts that have been made to subvert them.

Ver. 3. *She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.*] Let their business be what it will, whether in the courts of judgment, or among those that traffic in the city, or in their own private habitation, still they know what their duty is: which their own conscience, as well as God's ministers, rings so continually in their ears, that they cannot avoid such informations.

Ver. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men.*] Which they hear as plainly and distinctly, as if wisdom itself should call to them from above, saying, Hearken, O men, of whatsoever rank and condition you be; whether high or low, rich or poor; for my instructions are common to you all.

Ver. 5. *O ye simple ones, understand wisdom; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.*] Your fault is, that you are inconsiderate, and easily cheated, (vii. 21, 22.) or, which is worse, stupidly bent to follow your sensual appetite; as if you had no better inclinations: but if you will attend, I will make you more circumspect and wary; and dispose you to be led by prudent counsels.

Ver. 6. *Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.*] Do not turn away your ears, but listen to my words; for I will teach you things most worthy of your notice and choice; which will conduct you safely in all the passages of your life; and lay before you such a plain, direct, and easy path, that if you walk in it you shall not miss of being happy.

Ver. 7. *For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.*] For I will utter nothing rashly, or contrary to the truth; all falsehood, deceit, and whatsoever may do hurt, being so detestable to me, and so far from my thoughts, that the correction of such wickedness is the aim of my discourse.

Ver. 8. *All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.*] Every word

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of which is exactly conformable to the rule of righteousness; there is nothing I enjoin or forbid merely to hamper and perplex you, or to abridge you of your just liberty, much less to misguide and pervert you in the pursuit of what is good for you.

Ver. 9. *They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.*] But, whatsoever they may seem to inconsiderate and prejudiced minds, they will all manifestly appear equal and just unto him that uses his reason; and approve themselves, as I said, exactly conformable to the strictest rules of righteousness, unto well-disposed minds, who will be at the pains to know the difference between right and wrong, or between that which is good and that which is evil for them.

Ver. 10. *Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.*] They will not think me unreasonable, when I commend the very rebukes which I give them, (though administered by some sharp affliction, iii. 14.) and set such a high price upon them, as to advise every one to accept them rather than silver; and to value the knowledge of God, and of themselves, and of all things else (which these corrections teach them), above the choicest gold.

Ver. 11. *For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.*] For true wisdom is such an inestimable jewel, that the most precious pearls are trash to it; nor can our boundless fancies present any thing to our wishes, that is worthy to come in competition with it.

Ver. 12. *I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.*] For what is there comparable to a prudent mind, which is not crafty to deceive, but so cautious as not to be deceived? And this I may boast is solely in my power to endow men withal; who ever give the safest, nay, infallible advice, and direct men to discreeter resolutions in the most difficult cases, than the subtlest head in the world, that consults not with me, can invent for his clients.

Ver. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*] And my rules are as short as they are sure: for I teach men, in the first place, religiously to worship and stand in awe of the Divine Majesty; which is but a vain pretence; I farther instruct them, if it do not make them abominate all manner of evil, though but in design; more particularly, I hate that vain opinion men have of their own abilities to compass their designs, which makes them forget God, and despise the wholesome advice of honest men; as I likewise do the use of all unlawful means, though the end be good; especially lying, calumny, detraction, breach of faith, which every one must renounce who will have my friendship.

Ver. 14. *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.*] Who am the ablest counsellor in all deliberations; and give men the most certain, solid, and never-failing advice, for the effecting their desires, or being contented with disappointments: for I comprehend whatsoever is fit to be done or omitted in all undertakings; and inspire men also with courage to persist in good resolutions, which are neither rashly taken, nor wrongfully pursued.

Ver. 15. *By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.*] Kings themselves sit not fast on their thrones, though placed there by God himself, unless they be ruled by me: the wisest senators cannot support themselves and them, but by persuading them to enact and execute just and merciful laws for the government of their people.

Ver. 16. *By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.*] In vain do their great captains, or other ministers, endeavour to defend them, but under the conduct and protection of my virtuous discipline: nobles and all the judges of the land lose their authority, if they do not faithfully observe the rules that I prescribe them.

Ver. 17. *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.*] Which are no less amiable than they are easily known: there needing no more to come acquainted with me, but only to love me: for they that love me are beloved of me; and as they will not fail to seek what they love, so they shall certainly find what they studiously seek.

Ver. 18. *Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.*] And together with me, they shall find such riches and honour, as shall add to the greatness, and splendour, and stability, of their kingdoms and dignities: for not merely riches and honour are in my donation, but durable possessions; which will last the longer, because they are not gotten either by oppression, or by niggardice; for I teach men both to do justly and to love mercy also. (Dan. iv. 24.)

Ver. 19. *My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.*] Whereby I bring them in greater treasures than gold, though never so massy, never so refined; a revenue of higher value than the purest and choicest silver in the world.

Ver. 20. *I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.*] For I set their minds and hearts aright, and enrich them with excellent thoughts; which teach them how to use those earthly goods, and govern themselves with such exactness in all their private transactions or public administrations, as never to swerve from the steady rules of justice and equity.

Ver. 21. *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.*] In order to their happy settlement in a state of eternal peace and substantial satisfaction, which I confer on all those that sincerely love and adhere unto me; whose souls I will fill as full with abundance of inestimable riches, as their treasuries are with silver and gold, and all other stores.

Ver. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.*] For the Lord himself hath no greater riches than me, who lead men to a participation of him, and communion with him, (iii. 19, 20.) with whom I was ever present (as well as always most dear unto him), not only when he began to create this world, but before he made any of his works; when, as yet, there was nothing but himself.

Ver. 23. *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*] My sovereignty and dominion is from everlasting; and hath no superior to it: all antiquity comes infinitely short of mine; who was before the earth itself, the common mother of all mankind. (Gen. i. 1.)

Ver. 24. *When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.*] When, as yet, there were no depths, (Gen. i. 2.) I was conceived

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in the mind of God long before the sources and springs: whose excellent waters, which are of greater value than any other, owe their rise unto me, the inexhausted fountain of all things.

Ver. 25. *Before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth.*] Who had a being before the mountains, from whence those waters run, were settled; or there was so much as a hillock to be seen in the earth.

Ver. 26. *While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.*] For as yet the Lord had not made the earth itself, (as I said before, ver. 23.) much less adorned it, and put it into this form of lofty mountains and spacious plains: no, there was not so much as the first atom of this globe wherein you tread.

Ver. 27. *When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth.*] But why do I speak of the earth alone? I was present when he disposed the heavens into this wonderful order, wherein we behold them, as well as when he moved upon that confused abyss which they enclosed, and fashioned the earth into a regular shape.

Ver. 28. *When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep.*] When he made the watery clouds also, with admirable wisdom, so firm in the air, that they shall not fall down altogether, but by drops upon the earth: and provided strong cisterns for the waters pent up there; from whence they gush out forcibly, and yet wear not away the passages he hath opened for them.

Ver. 29. *When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth.*] When he prescribed also to the sea its limits, that the waters thereof (though they swell and toss up and down) shall not pass over the shores wherein he hath confined them: and when he settled the earth so steadfastly, like a building upon sure foundations, that it remains unmoveable in the place he appointed for it:

Ver. 30. *Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.*] Then was I with him, nay, very near unto him; contriving all these things: nor had he any higher pleasure than me, who, day by day, during the creation of the world, produced some lovely work or other; in which he rejoiced, to see how good and agreeable they were, (Gen. i. 4. 10. 12. 18. 21. 25. 31.)

Ver. 31. *Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.*] More particularly, I displayed my skill in the vast variety of creatures, wherewith I have beautified this earth wherein you dwell; which afford a most delightful spectacle unto me, and unto all wise observers: who may see, that, above all the rest, my principal thoughts were fixed upon the children of men, (Gen. i. 26.) in whom I delighted exceedingly; (as the Lord doth in me, ver. 30.) beholding them made in the image of God, and, after his likeness, capable to converse with me.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.*] Who may therefore justly expect (all these things considered) that you should cheerfully embrace my repeated counsels; and, as dutiful children, take the greatest pleasure in being obedient to them: for blessed, you cannot but see, blessed, beyond all expression, are they who observe (as all other creatures do) the laws that I have prescribed them.

Ver. 33. *Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.*] Hearken, I beseech you, and yield to the voice of your own reason, and of God's holy word and spirit; which checks the irregular motions which you find at any time in you; and be so wise and considerate as not to slight and reject it.

Ver. 34. *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*] But rather invite such instructions, by giving them thankful entertainment, and going thither where you may meet with them: for happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man, who not only hearkens obediently when he is told his duty, but makes it his business to be rightly informed; neglecting no opportunity, but constantly and diligently attending there, where he may be taught how he ought to live; most earnestly desiring to become my disciple, and to be governed by me.

Ver. 35. *For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*] In which, whatsoever pains he bestows, he shall not lose his labour: for as he shall not fail to find what he seeks, so he shall find withal, that I will make his life a perpetual pleasure to him; for I have demonstrated that he must needs be beloved of the Lord, to whom I am most nearly allied, and from him he shall obtain his heart's desire.

Ver. 36. *But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death.*] From whence it is manifest, that he who violates my laws, doth the greatest injury unto his own soul: and whosoever they be that hate to be reproved for it, and can neither endure to be told of their faults, nor receive any good advice, they love to be miserable, and wilfully bring upon themselves utter destruction.

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter the wise man seems to me to illustrate more fully what he had delivered in the conclusion of the foregoing, (ver. 32. 34, 35.) concerning the satisfaction and happiness they might expect to find, who would attend at the gates, and submit themselves to the government, of that heavenly wisdom; which he had described to be acquainted with all the secrets of the Almighty. And which he here again represents as a glorious queen, the daughter of heaven, adorned with all perfections (and [*a*] therefore uses a word of the plural number, ver. 1. whereby to express her excellences), living in a stately palace; unto which she invites all misguided souls, and promises them, if they will forsake their follies, the most delicious entertainment.

[*b*] Which is set forth under the notion of a feast, whereby the holy writers are wont to express (as the aptest resemblance of it that can be found) the high satisfaction, joy, and pleasure, which the principles of wisdom and virtue fill our hearts withal; when we have a true relish of them, that we embrace them and digest them, and are enlivened by them to a pious life.

This is the substance of the parable; every part of which is not to be minutely scanned; nor shall I go about to

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say what is particularly meant [c] by the *seven pillars* of wisdom's house (though, taking her house for the world, the *seven pillars* may well be thought the *seven planets*), what by her *meat*, what by her *drink*, &c. but look upon them only as a description of the ability of wisdom to impart complete satisfaction unto those that entertain her precepts. Which were principally taught in the schools of the prophets; whose business it was to instruct the people (as the scribes did afterward) in the law of God; and being dispersed in several places of the country, I have conjectured their schools might be the house here spoken of, where wisdom had her habitation. I cannot say certainly how many of them there were, much less that there were just seven principal schools, which might be looked upon as the main supporters of religion and virtue: but there were more than one it is evident from the sacred history; where, in one city, (1 Sam. ix. 13, 14.) we find Samuel seated (in whose times these schools began to flourish); who, no doubt, had there a college of prophets with him, as he had afterward, we find, at Ramah: (xix. 20.) and in another place called the *hill of God*, where the Philistines had a garrison, we meet with another company of prophets, (1 Sam. x. 5. 10.) And in aftertimes there were sons of the prophets both at Beth-el, (where they seem to have been more anciently, ver. 3.) and at Jericho, (2 Kings ii. 3. 5.) and at Gilgal, (iv. 38.)

These schools also were seated in *high places*, it appears from 1 Sam. ix. 2. x. 5. 10. [d] 2 Kings i. 9. (and might be one reason of their sacrificing in such places) which agrees exactly with what is said here of wisdom's crying upon the *highest places of the city*, (ver. 3.) to call all those who had an appetite to come and partake of her instructions. Which there was some hope all those might do, who were merely inconsiderate and deluded, (ver. 4.) though *scorners* (as he observes, ver. 7, 8. who perhaps called the prophets mad men) are so incapable of correction, that nothing will move them to become better; and therefore she passes them by, and leaves them to their beastly folly; which inclines them rather to listen to the enticements of such filthy strumpets as he had described, chap. vii.

Against whom there cannot be too much caution, the strumpet's house being, as St. Chrysostom (Hom. ii. upon St. Matt.) calls it, *the very shop of the devil:* and therefore the wise man again gives her character in this chapter, (ver. 13, 14, &c.) and represents the danger of being drawn in by her; that, if it was possible, he might make men sensible, there is nothing more inconsistent with wisdom, than to give up themselves to those impure lusts, which have been the ruin of all those that have been led by them.

That is one of the profitable lessons to be learnt from this chapter, in which the wise man concludes his preface to the book of Proverbs. And therefore again repeats once more, (ver. 10.) that *first principle* upon which all religion is built, wherewith he began this preface: (i. 7.) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Which they that want will be apt to make a laughter of all good instructions; and it is well if they be not angry at those who are so kind as to reprove them. If they be, it is best to let them alone, and not cast pearls before swine; as our Saviour teaches, [e] agreeable to the doctrine of the wise man, ver. 7—9. of this chapter.

Where the Lord Bacon (lib. viii. Advanc. of Learning, cap. 2. parab. 9.) is very curious, and distinguishes between a *scorner* and a *wicked man*, (mentioned ver. 7.) and between *shame* or reproach, and a *blot;* and, consequently, between *reproof* given to the one and *rebuke* to the other. "For a *scorner* (saith he) only makes us lose our labour; but the other repays us with a stain and dishonour. When a man instructs a *scorner*, his time indeed which he thus employs is thrown away, and others deride his pains, as a labour ill-placed; and the *scorner* himself also despiseth the knowledge which he is taught. *Thus a man is put to shame.* But the matter is transacted with greater danger in the reprehension of the other, because a *wicked nature* not only gives no ear to advice, but turns head against his *reprehender*, now made odious to him; whom he either wounds presently with contumelies before his face, or traduces afterward to others behind his back."

But I have not been thus nice in my Paraphrase, because it is the manner, I observe, of the wise man to repeat the same thing in the same verse, in other words, throughout all this book; and a *scorner* signifies the worst of men.

[f] In the ninth verse also the same great person, following the Vulgar, and reading the words thus, *give occasion to a wise man, and his wisdom will be increased*, makes this witty observation, (in the same chap. parab. 32.) that "occasion, when it is offered, shews the difference between wisdom that is ripened into habit, and that which swims only in the brain and conceit, or is boasted in speech, but hath not taken deep root. For the former upon occasion presented, whereby it may be exercised, is instantly quickened, addresses itself to the business, and is so enlarged and dilated, that it seems greater than itself: but the other, which, before occasion, was brisk and busy, now occasion is given, becomes amazed and confused: so that even he who presumed himself possessed of it, begins to be in doubt whether his pre-conceptions of such wisdom were not mere dreams and empty speculations."

But there being no such word as *occasion* in the original, and the word *give* seeming to me rather to refer to what the wise man is speaking of, *viz. reproof* or *instruction*, I have waived this observation; which will do well alone, but not be connected with the discourse, which is my design to represent. And here note this as a mark of a hopeful person, that is likely to become wise, if he be not galled with reproof, at which fools are wont to kick. This is a truth to be considered most seriously, by which every man may take a measure of himself, whether he be likely to come to good or not: if he cannot endure to be told of his faults, it is a shrewd sign he is in the way to be undone; and hath not as yet so much as approached to the gates of wisdom.

Which admonishes us here of another great fault of mankind, [g] who are most eager after that which is prohibited to them. An observation which is as true of their fondness and readiness to embrace heretical doctrines, (to which the fathers apply ver. 17.) if they be preached in a corner, and made a great secret; as of their appe-

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tite after those pleasures, from which they are restrained, and cannot have with public approbation.

Ver. 1. *WISDOM hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.*] Do not imagine that I commend unto you some meaner piece of knowledge or skill, but the most absolute and accomplished wisdom; whose worth and dignity are inexpressible: for, as this great world I told you (viii. 26, 27, &c.) was built by wisdom in most excellent order and perfect beauty, so from every part of it we may learn what regard we ought to have to her holy precepts; which are taught every where, but especially in the schools of the prophets. See Arg. [*a*] [*b*] [*c*]

Ver. 2. *She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine: she hath also furnished her table.*] There, above all other places, a most plentiful provision is made for all hungry and thirsty souls (that are desirous to know what is good for themselves), who shall find no less life, and vigour, and strength, and joy, communicated to them from her sacred instructions, than the body doth when it partakes of a liberal and most delicious feast.

Ver. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city.*] For nothing is wanting there, but only guests to accept of her entertainment; unto which her attendants and ministers (persons of uncorrupted purity and sincerity) are sent to invite you, with a loud voice and earnest entreaties, which cannot but be heard by whole cities and countries, unto whom the dwelling-places of wisdom and the food of souls lie openly exposed. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 4. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him.*] There is no man so silly but he may be welcome to it; or rather all such persons are desired to bethink themselves, how inconsiderately they have been seduced, and to forbear the prosecution of their foolish desires so long, as to take advice of her. Let a man be never so much besotted with vice and wickedness, she doth not reject him, nor despair of him; if he will but hearken, when she makes this gracious motion to the whole knot of them;

Ver. 5. *Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.*] Draw near, consider, and lay to heart, the wholesome instructions which I propound to you; credit me so far as to rely upon the promise which I make you of the highest comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, in embracing and obeying my precepts.

Ver. 6. *Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.*] Do but make a trial, by forsaking all ill company, and those childish desires and senseless courses of which you can give no account to yourselves; and immediately you shall have a taste of happiness, which will invite you to perfect it, by following hereafter the deliberate dictates of sober reason, and the grave counsels of prudent persons, who have discerning minds, and practise themselves what they commend to others.

Ver. 7. *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.*] As for those that deride religion, and scoff at all good admonitions, it is in vain to meddle with them; for reproofs are fittest for such persons; and he who performs that charitable office, not only loses his labour, but is like to be requited with reproaches; whosoever he be that rebukes one of those impious wretches, hath commonly all the dirt thrown upon him that his malice can rake together. See Arg. [*d*] [*e*]

Ver. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*] Therefore men of that wicked temper wisdom doth not invite to her instructions, nor require her ministers to call upon them; but rather to pass them by, when they find by experience that they can do no good to such persons, but only draw their hatred upon themselves: from such it is wisdom to turn away, and bestow reproofs upon those who have so much understanding, as to see God's ministers intend their good, and accordingly thank them for it, and give them opportunity to do them farther service.

Ver. 9. *Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.*] For this is an undoubted maxim, that a man disposed to learn will grow wiser even by reprehension; and the instructions given to a man inclined to goodness, will make him better, and much improve him: not only in knowledge, but in the practice of virtue (whereas a scorner grows worse by endeavours to reform him, and is only made more incapable of good advice, by being exasperated and enraged at it). See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.*] And the very first, and indeed the principal thing that is to be instilled into all men's minds, without which they will learn nothing else, is a religious sense of the Divine Majesty, and an awful regard towards him (as I have observed already more than once, i. 7. ii. 5. viii. 13. but it cannot be too oft repeated). And next to this, that no knowledge deserves the name of understanding, but that which is delivered by the holy men of God, and disposes us to devote ourselves unto him in holy obedience.

Ver. 11. *For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.*] Other knowledge may make thee subtle and cunning in thy worldly affairs, but this alone can make thee happy: and will certainly both prolong thy life, (as I have frequently said, iii. 2. 16. iv. 10. 13, &c.) and lengthen it in health, peace, prosperity, and pleasure.

Ver. 12. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*] This is the true reason I invite thee so earnestly to imbibe my doctrine, (ver. 5.) not for my own sake, but for thine; who alone wilt either reap the profit of being truly virtuous, or suffer all the harm and mischief (which will not in the least redound to me) of thy profane scoffs and jeers at religion and goodness.

Ver. 13. *A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knoweth nothing.*] Unto which profaneness as there want not temptations, so there is none more dangerous, I think, which makes me mention it so often, (ii. 16. v. 3. vi. 24. vii. 10, 11, &c.) than the lewd and impious adulteress; who is no less bold and importunate, than she is bewitching and powerful, to besot the minds of her stupid lovers; but perfectly ignorant of God and religion, and a stranger to all the principles of virtue.

Ver. 14. *For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city.*] Which she openly opposes, for (as if she would put a manifest affront upon them) in

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that very place where the ministers of wisdom call men to learn the fear of the Lord (ver. 3. 10.) she sits in state at the door of her house, to divert their minds from all such thoughts, and drown them in sensual pleasures.

Ver. 15. *To call passengers who go right on their ways.*] That is the very business of her life, to defeat all good designs; by drawing even those aside into her chambers of impurity, who were going straight forward to the schools of wisdom and goodness.

Ver. 16. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him.*] Whose words (ver. 4.) she no less impudently than profanely returns, and tells them, It is not she, but wisdom and virtue that make men fools; by confining their desires, and denying them the liberties which she invites them to come and enjoy in her embraces; where their dulness shall learn this unknown secrets.

Ver. 17. *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.*] That there are no pleasures comparable to those which a man gets by stealth from them to whom they properly belong; no morsel so sweet, as that which is forbidden; but, having been long desired, he finds at last a private opportunity to taste of without danger. See Arg.[*g*]

Ver. 18. *But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.*] But the poor deluded wretch considers not all this while (which I have often already represented, ii. 18. v. 5. vii. 27. and is all that I shall oppose to those sinful enticements) that she invites him to utter ruin both of soul and body; (See ii. 18.) and sinks all those down who accept of her invitation to the very bottom of that pit where the old giants are, who corrupted mankind with such filthiness and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the earth, (Gen. vi. 4, 5. 11.)

PART I.

CHAP. X.

The Proverbs of Solomon.

ARGUMENT.

Here now properly begins the book of the Proverbs (as the title of this chapter tells us), what hath been delivered hitherto being rather a preface, to awaken attention, and from sundry arguments to commend the wise instructions, which now follow, to every one's practice; and to caution those who would receive benefit by these instructions, from such things as may hinder their edification in the school of wisdom.

Whose lessons, in this first part of the book, (which reaches to the 17th verse of chap. xxii.) are delivered in short sentences; every verse being a lesson by itself; which commonly hath no connexion with that which goes before and follows after: or if there be any, it is not so clear as to be easily made out. And these lessons are for the most part delivered, either by way of antithesis, *i. e.* comparing opposites one with another; the wise, for instance, and the foolish, the diligent and the sluggish, the rich and the poor; and, in general, virtue and vice, assigning to each their proper rewards and punishments; or they are mere parables, that is, similitudes; in which one thing is compared to another that resembles it.

And he intending to instruct all sorts of men in their several kinds of life, these lessons are very various; and do not merely inform them about their *manners*, but about the *events* also, which are wont (either frequently or sometimes) to accompany or follow such and such estates, offices, and actions of human life. And some are directions for single persons; others for the ordering of household affairs; and others for the government of kingdoms. In short, some are Divine precepts; others, civil advertisements for the management of ourselves in several passages of human life: to the observance of which he excites the reader sometimes by promises, sometimes by threatenings.

It is not to be expected that in a Paraphrase I should preserve the smartness that is in many of these sentences: and it will be hard to abridge, as I have done hitherto, the contents of each chapter. Yet, I shall attempt something in it: and though I cannot say there is an order observed in them all (they being only a collection of wise observations and aphorisms, in which method is wont to be neglected by other authors), yet the first sentence of this chapter seems not to have been casually, [*a*] but designedly set in the front of the rest. Because nothing contributes so much every way to the happiness of mankind, as a religious care about the education of children. Which parents are here admonished to attend, if they desire their children should not prove a grief and shame to them; and children are put in mind of the obedience they owe to their instructions, that they may be a joy to their parents.

The Lord Bacon, in his Advancement of Learning, (lib. viii. cap. 2. parab. 7.) thinks that the *gladness* and heaviness which are in *fathers* and *mothers*, according as their children prove good or bad, are here so accurately distinguished by Solomon; "that he would represent a wise and well-governed son to be chiefly a *comfort to the father*, who knows the value of wisdom and virtue better than the *mother* (which account the Hebrews also give of this matter), and therefore rejoices more at the towardliness of his son; which he not only better understands, but hath taken perhaps so much more care about his education, that the good fruits of it give *him* a greater joy than they can do to the *mother*. Who, on the other side, is *more grieved and discomfited* at the calamity of a son; both because the affection of a mother is more soft and tender, and perchance is conscious to herself, that by too much indulgence she hath tainted and corrupted his tender years." She is more at home also (it may be added), and therefore having her son's folly more in her eye, hath a greater share in the grief that it causes.

But this is not to be too much pressed, I think, for both of them have such a share either in the *joy* or in the *sorrow*, that it is as hard to distinguish between them constantly, as it is to make a difference between the joy and grief for the well or ill doing of a *son*, and the well or ill doing of a *daughter:* which may be, and ofttimes are, equal. And therefore I have but just touched upon this in my paraphrase of the first verse. Concerning which I shall note this farther, that whether these instructions were written with a peculiar respect to the education of

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Solomon's own son, or indifferently for all, it was most judiciously done to begin with such as this first part chiefly consists of; there being so great a necessity (as the forenamed writer observes in his seventh book, chap. 3.) "that men drink deeply all pious and moral knowledge before they taste of politic, that they who are bred up in the courts of princes, and in affairs of state, from tender years, rarely attain to inward and sincere probity of manners. For not being seasoned with religion and the doctrine of manners, and offices of life, their judgments are corrupted and made to think, that there are no true and solid moral differences of things, but all things are to be measured by utility and success." And in this false opinion they are the more immoveably settled, if to ill education there be added the fuel of bad books: which all those will reject with disdain, who shall be so happy as to make this book their early study.

In which there follow here immediately (and very properly) some instructions about getting riches, and about the keeping and using them aright, (ver. 2, 3, &c.) that a curse may not be entailed upon them, and descend with them unto our children. And then (ver. 7.) a memorable observation is annexed [*b*] (which Plato, as Eusebius observes, translated into his seventh book of Laws), concerning the fame of good and bad men after they are dead. About which the same great man beforenamed (the Lord Bacon) hath this note in the same eighth book, parab. 8. that "the name of good men, after envy is extinguished (which cropped the blossom of their fame, while they were alive), presently shoots up and flourisheth; and their praises daily increase in strength and vigour:" but for wicked men, "though their fame through the partial favour of friends, and of men of their own faction, may last for a little time, a detestation of their name springs up not long after; and at last those vanishing praises end in infamy, and, like bodies that putrefy, expire in a filthy and noisome odour:" and thus the LXX. in this place, instead of *memory of the just is blessed*, or *is with blessing* or *benediction*, have these words, *the memory of the just is with encomiums*, or *praises:* which is the true explication of the phrase. And, accordingly, the church commemorates the saints of God, recounting their worthy deeds, and praising him for them. Of which, see Mr. Mede, Disc. xxii.

The rest of the chapter consists of mixed observations, concerning the difference between *wise* men and *fools*, *idle persons* and *diligent*, *ill-natured* people and those who are *candid and kind*, (ver. 12.) and especially between the vices and virtues of the tongue, and their rewards and punishments, (ver. 13, 14, &c.) And one remarkable observation is inserted, (ver. 22.) which belongs to [*c*] that head of diligence and laboriousness: upon which, he remembers us, no man is so to depend, as to imagine to obtain what he would have by that alone; but to look up to God as the donor of all good things, and giving success to our industry. Which was a thing little thought of by heathens, who were too prone to imagine all things requisite unto happiness to be placed in themselves. But the Scriptures every where inculcate this, that it is God who gives wisdom to the wise, and victory to the valiant, and riches to the diligent, and good success to the prudent and potent, &c.

[*d*] Unto which add that observation also, (ver. 24.) which may be farther improved than is expressed in the Paraphrase, to this sense: That wicked men many times draw upon themselves that which they feared, by those very means whereby they study to avoid them. An example of which (as Bochartus observes in his Phaleg. lib. i. cap. 16. par. i.) we have in those that built the tower of Babel: who, for fear of dispersion, designed to build a city and a tower, saying, "Go to, let us build, &c. lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," (Gen. xi. 4.) But God so ordered it, that this very attempt was the occasion of their dispersion, and brought what they feared sooner upon them, "atque ipsum mali remedium illis cessit in periculum:" *the very remedy of the evil they would have avoided, leading them directly into it.*

R. Levi hath an observation, that the precepts of wisdom, from the beginning of this chapter to the tenth verse of the eighteenth, are in a manner all concerning the danger of several sorts of vice and wickedness; and afterward they are all concerning other subjects: which, how true it is, I shall there consider.

Ver. 1. *THE Proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*] Let the father's care in educating his children (especially his son, the heir of his family) be equal to the joy he will have in their well-doing: and let the mother beware that her indulgence do not spoil them; for she will have the greatest share in the heaviness which their untowardness will give them. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.*] This is more necessary than the care of heaping up riches for them (which many times tempt men to fraud and oppression); for, though great treasures be gotten by such means, they will be so far from availing the owners in time of distress, that they will rather expose them to be a prey; when justice and mercy, with a little wealth, will procure safety and deliverance from the greatest dangers.

Ver. 3. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.*] The reason is, the Lord hath treasures in store for the just, especially for the merciful man; and will send him such supplies in his straits, that he shall not starve, but rather have enough: but he will drive the wicked out of their ill-gotten possessions, whereby they think to secure themselves from want.

Ver. 4. *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*] And next unto virtue let children be bred up to industry; without which, indeed, they cannot be virtuous; for both poverty and fraud are commonly the fruit of negligence and sloth; when an active diligence is wont to enrich men, without the help of deceit.

Ver. 5. *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*] Especially if prudence be added to diligence, and opportunity be not neglected: for as he that makes hay (as we speak) while the sun shines, is commended for his provident care, so he that, by taking his ease when he should gather the fruits of the earth, loses all the benefit of his former labours, is a shame to himself, and unto those that bred him.

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Ver. 6. *Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.*] The blessings of Heaven shall visibly descend in great plenty upon the just and merciful man; but their own iniquity shall violently overwhelm those, to their utter confusion, who wickedly defraud and oppress their neighbour.

Ver. 7. *The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.*] And though envy may sometimes cloud a good man for the present, yet after death an honourable mention shall be made of him; and he shall be commemorated with praises: when the memory of the wicked, who now perhaps are extolled, shall either perish or stink, and be abominated. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 8. *The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.*] He that is truly wise will thankfully receive such good advices as these, and avoid the dangers of which he is admonished: but he whose wisdom lies only in his tongue (which moves upon all occasions, and will not let him learn of others), ruins himself, even by his own imprudent prating.

Ver. 9. *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.*] He that deals sincerely in all his actions is both safe and sure; but he that relies upon fraud and tricks of deceiving, shall find his cunning fail him at the last; and, besides, can never be secure that he shall not be detected and made a public reproach.

Ver. 10. *He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.*] But he especially, that under pretence of kindness betrays his neighbour, and gives the sign to others, when he would have them circumvent him, is a common grievance; and shall himself, in the end, feel the miserable effects of his falseness: for he is worse than a man who, openly professing his malice, rails perpetually, and thereby sooner hurts himself than others.

Ver. 11. *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.*] The discourse of a good man (like a perpetual spring of wholesome water) always tends to the profit, comfort, and refreshment of those that receive it: but a wicked man, how fair soever his language be, doth but conceal the mischief which (like pestilent waters out of a deep pit) he designs to produce when opportunity serves.

Ver. 12. *Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.*] Such is the difference between hatred and love, that where all things are in quiet, *hatred* raises up disturbance, and makes men quarrel about trifles; when *love* pacifies the minds of those that it finds provoked by real offences, and composes all those contentions, for which there was too much occasion.

Ver. 13. *In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.*] He that would be wise must seek the acquaintance of some intelligent person: but the most knowing person in the world cannot make him wise that is void of consideration; who will never learn, unless, perhaps, by some great affliction.

Ver. 14. *Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.*] Wise men treasure up knowledge, and reserve it till a fitting opportunity to make use of it: but a fool is always talking, and seldom opens his mouth but it proves a present mischief to himself or others.

Ver. 15. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.*] Riches are a powerful defence to their owners against a great many evils, to which we are subject in this life; and naturally raise men's minds, and make them confident: whereas poverty exposes men to injuries and abuses; and is apt to depress and deject their spirits.

Ver. 16. *The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.*] Which is a great motive to an honest diligence; but then remember this, that the end of a virtuous man's labours after riches is only that he may provide himself the necessaries of life, and that he may do good with them; but the great revenues, which, perhaps, are left to a wicked man by his ancestors, without any pains of his own, are employed to satisfy his sinful lusts and passions.

Ver. 17. *He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.*] He that carefully observes, and puts men in mind of these wholesome admonitions, which may teach them to correct and amend their lives, is in the way to make himself and others happy: but he that leaves off to give reproof, encourages men in their errors; from which he, who shuns those who are wont to reprehend him, is never like to be reclaimed.

Ver. 18. *He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth slander, is a fool.*] He that dissembleth his hatred, by great professions of friendship before one's face, and then goes and vents it in slanders behind his back, may seem a cunning man; but is really an impious fool.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: for he that refraineth his lips is wise.*] Nor are calumny and flattery the only vices of the tongue; but much speaking is rarely innocent: therefore he that is sparing of his words, and considers well both when, and where, and what, he speaks, is a truly prudent person.

Ver. 20. *The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.*] The words of such a man are exceeding valuable; because they are both solid and sincere; but let wicked men devise and study what they please, it will be good for little, or rather very mischievous.

Ver. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.*] Many are preserved from perishing by the discourses of a good man: but a fool, for want of consideration, receives no benefit by them, and doth not so much as take care to save himself.

Ver. 22. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow with it.*] It is not merely men's industry and provident care to which they owe their riches, but the blessing of God prospering their endeavours; which, when he favours, wealth flows in apace upon them; and is enjoyed also without anxious thoughts and labours. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 23. *It is as a sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.*] A senseless sinner makes a jest of the most horrid impieties that can be committed by himself or others: but a man that weighs things wisely, considers that this is no laughing matter; and takes that pleasure in doing well which fools take in mischievous wickedness.

Ver. 24. *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.*] Yet there is none so wicked but he is sometimes afraid; and since this will not amend him, he shall feel what he fears: but

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this is the comfort of righteous men, who have reason to hope, that they shall at length obtain their desires. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 25. *As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.*] Though the wicked, like a whirlwind, may bluster terribly, and overthrow all that stands in his way, yet he quickly vanishes, and destroys himself by his own violence: but the righteous, as he is fixed and settled in his virtue, which is peaceable and quiet, and makes no disturbance; so he enjoys the solid fruits of it, in a durable and immoveable felicity.

Ver. 26. *As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.*] Vinegar is not more offensive to the teeth, nor smoke more vexatious to the eyes, than a remiss and negligent minister is to him that employs him, and relies upon him in a weighty business.

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*] The best way to prolong life, is religiously to observe the laws of God: but wickedness generally (both by its own nature and by God's righteous judgment) brings men to an untimely end.

Ver. 28. *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.*] And what a lamentable case is a wicked man in, when he finds himself unexpectedly undone? for this is another difference between a good man and a bad; that the hope of the former concludes in a joyful possession of what he waits for; but the other, failing of his expectation, ends his days in sadness and sorrow.

Ver. 29. *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.*] Whence it follows, also, that a faithful observance of the rules of virtue, which the Lord hath prescribed us, inspires the upright man with great courage, and undaunted resolution, when any evil threatens him: but the workers of iniquity, being weak and feeble-spirited, are terribly shaken, nay, broken, with the fear of that destruction which is coming on them.

Ver. 30. *The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.*] There is no way like piety, justice, and mercy, to establish a family in perpetual prosperity; but the wicked (how successful soever they may be for a time) shall not be able to settle themselves and their posterity in the good land, which God hath given us.

Ver. 31. *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.*] The very discourse of a righteous man is so profitable to instruct others in wisdom and goodness, that it shall be a means to perpetuate him, like a fruitful tree in a flourishing condition: but he that uses his tongue perversely, to abuse, cozen, or raise dissensions among his neighbours, shall be cut down, like a tree that cumbers the ground.

Ver. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.*] The righteous knows very well how to speak those things (and accustoms his mouth unto them) which are grateful to men, and yet not displeasing to Almighty God; but the wicked are odious to both, because they are skilled altogether in lying and flattery, fraud and calumny, and such-like subtle, but detestable, arts of doing mischief.

CHAP. XI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter consists of many promiscuous observations, concerning such things as will make men happy or miserable. It begins with an admonition concerning *justice* in our dealings one with another; without which society (which God designs, and takes a special care to uphold) cannot be preserved. And mankind being very apt to be regardless what they do towards God, or towards man, when they grow rich and great, he next gives a caution against *pride* and *insolence*, as a certain forerunner of ruin. For it consisting in forgetfulness of God, confidence in men's selves, despising others, slighting good counsels, and attempting things out of the bounds of men's place and calling (all which proceed from stupid folly), naturally leads men headlong into destruction. Then he commends *sincerity* and *charity*, (ver. 3, 4.) and represents the vast difference between virtue and wickedness, in order to men's private safety, (ver. 5, 6, &c.) and to the public security, (ver. 10, 11.) After which follow a great many prudent observations and advices for men's private, and for the common good; with such remarks upon sundry virtues and vices, as are sufficient to invite to the one, and deter from the other.

[*a*] Among the rest there is one, ver. 21. (translated thus by us, *though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished*) upon which there are as many glosses almost as there are interpreters. But I have only put together those two senses of the former part of the verse, which are most agreeable to the latter; and do not think fit to trouble the reader with the other, any farther than merely to inform him of this one thing: That most interpreters by *hand in hand* understand the hands of divers persons; but some few take it for the hands of one and the same person, who puts one hand into the other. And these last named make the sense one of these two ways: either that though a sinner endeavour to hide his sin (as a man doth a thing which he holds in one hand and covers with the other), he shall notwithstanding be found out and suffer for it; or that, though wicked men do nothing, but like an idle person have their hands folded one in the other, yet they are not free from sin, which they are devising in their mind, and will draw a just vengeance upon them.

[*b*] In the next verse I have followed Bochartus, de Animal. Sac. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 57. in his translation of those two words, מדח מצם which he renders, *her mind departed, viz.* from the love of her husband: but I have not neglected the other sense, of which I think those words are capable.

[*c*] In the twenty-ninth verse I have adhered to the opinion of the Lord Bacon, (book viii. of the Advanc. of Learning, chap. ii. parab. 9.) who takes it for "a profitable admonition, touching discords in families and domestic breaches (but may as well be applied to whole kingdoms, which are larger families), which whosoever cherishes among his children, or servants (or people), as a means to have his affairs better administered when they have an evil eye upon and hate one another, commonly finds his hopes turn into wind. For those alterations and

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changes, for the most part, succeed ill: and those disturbers of their own families oftentimes meet with vexations and ingratitudes from those very persons whom (passing by others) they adopt as the objects of their special favour: nay, by this means they draw upon themselves ill reports and doubtful rumours; for it is not ill observed by Cicero, *that all reports, both good and bad fame, come from domestics.* Which two evils (he thinks) Solomon expresses by *inheriting the wind:* for the *frustrating of expectations* and *raising of rumours* are rightly compared unto *winds.*" I have added in the Paraphrase two other things belonging to wind; which *makes a great noise,* and *leaves nothing behind it:* for all make it an emblem of *emptiness.*

[*d*] The last verse is a wise consideration suggested to good men, when they are under the oppressions of the wicked: that if the just be afflicted (as Melancthon glosses), who seriously endeavour amendment of life, God will take a time to reckon with those lewd men, who contumaciously and furiously persist in their wickedness. So the wise man (says he) admonishes us of two things. First, that the church is subject to the cross, which the cruelty of tyrants may lay upon it: but, secondly, those tyrants must one day answer for their cruelty by sharp punishments upon themselves: nay, though they flourish for some time, at last (says he) they are shaken out of their empires. Hither he applies those known words of the poet, *Ad generum Cereris sine cæde,* &c.

Ver. 1. *A FALSE balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.*] It is not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat their neighbour (though it be only in a little matter), but extremely hateful and detestable to the great Lord and Governor of the world: as, on the other side, exactly just and equal dealing in all our commerce one with another, is highly pleasing to him.

Ver. 2. *When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.*] Do not entertain a haughty conceit of thyself, nor insult over others; for the folly of this appears, in drawing along with it that contempt and disgrace, which above all things such men would avoid: therefore be humble and modest; the wisdom of which is manifest, from the universal respect which it gains every where.

Ver. 3. *The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.*] The integrity of those that uprightly observe the rules of virtue, is their highest prudence, and safest guide, through all manner of difficulties and dangers: but the crafty wiliness of perfidious men, who will be tied unto no laws, is mere folly; and shall be so far from preserving them, that it shall prove their certain destruction.

Ver. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.*] Heaps of wealth, amassed by extortion or covetousness, shall as little avail as subtilty and cunning, when God, in his righteous displeasure, shall punish the world by a common calamity: but justice, accompanied with mercy, (as hath been observed already, x. 2.) will befriend him that hath constantly practised them, and rescue him, even when there is no hope of safety. (See Eccles. xxix. 11—13. xl. 24.)

Ver. 5. *The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.*] Remember this (and be not nauseated at the repetition of it, for it is a weighty truth), that there is no surer guide to direct men in the plain way to safety, or any other good, than a sincere and impartial observance of all God's laws: but that the wicked shall perish by those very impious courses (of lies, suppose, breach of promises, perjuries, and oppression), whereby they think to greaten or to secure themselves.

Ver. 6. *The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.*] Remember it, I say (for it cannot be too often inculcated), that the virtue of unfeignedly and entirely upright men, shall be their preservative when they are in danger: but they that are governed wholly by their own depraved desires and interests, shall be entangled, and inevitably perish in their own naughty contrivances.

Ver. 7. *When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of unjust men perisheth.*] Do not imagine, therefore, that they have the advantage of others, who are loose from all laws. They may seem so to have for the present: but, beside what I have now said, it must be considered that death (and how suddenly doth that sometimes overtake them) utterly destroys all their projects and hopes: whatsoever they expected to accomplish by their riches, or their power, or their friends, it perisheth together with them.

Ver. 8. *The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*] Nay, before that, it is frequently seen, that a just man is unexpectedly drawn out of those straits and difficulties wherein he was perplexed, and the wicked (who, perhaps, brought him into them) takes the place which he hath left; falling into those very distresses from which the just is happily freed.

Ver. 9. *A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.*] And, more than this, a good man hath this advantage by his wisdom, that it sometimes instructs many how to evade those snares, which the profane hypocrite, with counterfeit professions of friendship, lays to destroy his neighbours.

Ver. 10. *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.*] We see also in this, how amiable virtue, and how hateful vice is, that the inhabitants of a city generally leap for joy when good men prosper, and are advanced unto power: but are so far from pitying the downfall of the wicked, that they shout when they behold them tumbling from the high places to which they were raised.

Ver. 11. *By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.*] Men of unbiassed virtue make a city flourish by the blessings they procure for it from heaven, by their prayers, by their prudent advice, their pious admonitions, and their constant study of the public good; but the wicked, by their blasphemies, their evil counsels, their pestilent maxims, their impious doctrines, whereby they corrupt men's manners, utterly subvert the good estate thereof.

Ver. 12. *He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.*] It is a great weakness to speak contemptuously of any man, or to render him ridiculous (for no man is so mean but he is sensible of despisal, and may find ways to shew his re-

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sentment), therefore a thoroughly prudent person, whatsoever he thinks of others, saith nothing to their reproach.

Ver. 13. *A tale-bearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*] A man whose trade it is to ingratiate himself by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have entrusted him; but a man whose mind is steadfastly fixed to be true and faithful to his neighbours, will study (though they have not desired him) to hide those things, which, being known, may prove injurious to them.

Ver. 14. *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*] Where prudent counsellors are wanting, a nation goes to wreck, as certainly as a ship doth without a pilot: nor is one sufficient; but then a country is safe, when there are many wise men to govern affairs: that if one fail, there may enough still remain; or what one or two sees not, others may be able to discern.

Ver. 15. *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure.*] He is in great danger to be undone, who stands bound to pay the debts of another man, especially of a stranger, (vi. 1.) whose ability and honesty are unknown to him; and the way to be secure from that fear is, not only to avoid such engagements one's self, but to abhor to see other men enter into them.

Ver. 16. *A gracious woman retaineth honour; and strong men retain riches.*] Beauty and virtue in a woman advance her to honour; as formidable strength and power in men advance them to riches: and as their principal care is to keep their treasures, so hers should be to preserve her reputation.

Ver. 17. *The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.*] He that hath a heart to be kind and bountiful unto his neighbours, will have this advantage by it, among many others, that he will not deny what is fit and convenient to himself; whereas the covetous and hardhearted, as he hath no regard to his nearest relations, so he pinches his own flesh by his sordid way of living.

Ver. 18. *The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*] He thinks perhaps hereby to raise himself, or his posterity, to greatness, but, like all other wicked men, will be deceived in his expectation; for the event of his actions never answers the design; but virtuous men shall infallibly reap the fruit of their pious, just, and charitable labours.

Ver. 19. *As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.*] Thus God orders it in his providence, and thus it is in the nature of things, that virtue tends to make men happy: but the more eagerly any man pursues an evil thing, the more he is bent upon his own destruction.

Ver. 20. *They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.*] Of all other men they are most odious to the Lord, who pretend to justice, kindness, and truth, but study and advise how to compass their ends, though it be by the wickedest means: as, on the contrary, they whose exact observance of the rules of righteousness in the whole course of their lives testify the integrity of their hearts, are highly in his favour and love.

Ver. 21. *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.*] Though the wicked endeavour to strengthen himself and his family by powerful leagues and confederacies, and his successors also have mighty associates to maintain his acquisitions, they shall not be able to defend themselves from the punishment their iniquity deserves: but the posterity of the righteous need not be at such pains; but, though deserted by men, escape the danger into which the others fall, by the help of God alone. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 22. *As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.*] As a golden ring is ill placed in the snout of a swine, which is always routing in the mire; so is beauty ill bestowed on the body of a woman whose mind, having lost all savour and relish of virtue, carries her from her husband, to wallow in filthy lust, and adulterous pleasures. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 23. *The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.*] The righteous desire nothing but that it may be well with all men; but the wicked wish for trouble and disturbance, especially that they may execute their malice and wrath upon those whom they hate: and accordingly God will deal with them; good things shall be the portion of the righteous, but his just indignation shall frustrate the expectation of the wicked.

Ver. 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*] You may see by this how miserably they are mistaken, who imagine none so wise as the penurious; that you shall find here and there a man who communicates readily and liberally to the necessities of others, and yet his estate is so far from being impaired thereby, that it increases: when others, who are so saving that they will part with nothing, no, not upon the most just occasions, do not thrive at all, but by one means or other become beggars.

Ver. 25. *The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*] Let not him therefore that bestows benefits, imagine thereby he shall be impoverished, for it is the certain way to enrich himself: and the larger his charity is, and the more diffused for the refreshment of others, the greater abundance shall be poured on him, and the abler still shall he grow to do more good.

Ver. 26. *He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.*] He that hoardeth up corn in a time of scarcity, on purpose to raise the price, shall fall into the popular hatred, and be loaded with many a curse: but he who then opens his granaries and sells at a moderate rate, shall not only have the people's good word, but the blessing of God.

Ver. 27. *He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.*] He that from the time he rises, studies nothing but how to do good to others, shall obtain favour both with God and man; but he whose business it is to do mischief, shall draw upon himself the evil he designs against others.

Ver. 28. *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.*] He whose confidence in riches, as the surest support and defence, makes him covetous, unjust, and unmerciful, shall fall to decay like a withered leaf: but they whose pious dependance upon

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God makes them just and charitable, like a flourishing tree, shall thrive and prosper.

Ver. 29. *He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind; and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.*] He that makes or cherishes dissensions and factions in his own family (or kingdom) may, by making a great bustle and stir, seem to be a notable man; but will not only be deceived in his expectations, but defame his government, and bring his estate to nothing: nay, it is oftentimes seen that he who is thus foolish loses all his authority, and becomes a servant to him who administers his affairs with a more prudent care. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 30. *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*] The benefit the world receives from a just and charitable man is so great, that it may be compared to the fruit of the tree of life; which keeps mankind from being miserable: but he is the greatest benefactor of all, who communicates wisdom so charitably and seasonably, that he draws souls to the love of virtue.

Ver. 31. *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.*] But who is there so good as to do, or to suffer, no evil? And if God do not let the just and charitable man (mark what I say), they who are so useful and beneficial to the world, go without correction; who can think that the wicked, who is good for nothing, but obstinately contemns and breaks all the laws of God and man, shall escape the just punishment of his many crimes? See 1 Pet. iv. 18. and Arg. [d]

CHAP. XII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter begins with an admonition, often inculcated in this book, concerning the affection wherewith a man, that would be wise and good, ought to receive charitable reproofs. And there are several things also repeated, concerning the providence of almighty God; in punishing men according to their wickedness, and delivering good men from those who seek their destruction: which is notably expressed in three verses, one after another, (ver. 5—7.) where he observes how the wicked, labouring to compass their ends, by cozenage, or by violence, even by blood (especially if they can privately make a man away), not only miscarry in their designs, but are unexpectedly overturned and subverted out of their places, wherein they behave themselves with such injustice and cruelty.

There are divers instructions, also, here repeated about several virtues and vices; especially those of the tongue. Among which Melancthon commends this to the remembrance of the reader, ver. 22. [a] *lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;* who recommends to us (says he) the *love and care of truth;* both in doctrines concerning himself, and in arts, and in all honest covenants and contracts. For truth being among the chiefest and most conspicuous virtues, therefore the contrary vice is condemned, by a terrible word, and called *abomination, i. e.* such an evil as God detests with a singular indignation (for idols are called βδελύγματα, *abominations,* or *abominable things*), which is principally true of such lies, as are on purpose invented to destroy men's fame; and much more of such as are devised for the taking away their lives, and the ruin of their families: such as those which David often complains were contrived against him.

The Lord Bacon hath made notable remarks also upon another passage in this chapter, (ver. 10.) where he observes concerning the former [b] part of the verse, that "there is implanted in man's nature a noble and excellent affection of pity and compassion, called here *mercy:* which extends itself even unto brute creatures, that are by Divine ordination subject to his command. And therefore this compassion hath some analogy with that of a prince towards his subjects: nay, farther, it is most certain, that the worthier any soul is, the larger is its compassion. For contracted and degenerate minds imagine these things appertain not to them: but the mind that looks upon itself as a nobler portion of the universe, is kindly affected towards inferior creatures, out of the communion there is between them: wherefore we see that there were under the old law many precepts concerning this, which were not so much merely *ceremonial,* as *institutions of mercy.* As that of not eating flesh with the blood in it, and such-like." I suppose he means those mentioned Exod. xxiii. 5. 19. Deut. v. 4. xxii. 6, 7. xxv. 4. For, as Grotius hath excellently observed, it is very laudable to exercise kindness towards brute creatures, that we may keep ourselves the more remote from all manner of cruelty towards men. Which the angel, the Jews think, reproved in Balaam when he chid him for striking his ass three times. For thus they bring in the angel speaking to him, in the great commentary upon Numbers: If I am required to demand satisfaction for the injury done thy ass, concerning whom there is no law of justice, nor covenant of our fathers, how much more for this, that thou goest about utterly to root out a whole nation?

I omit what the same Lord Bacon there says (book viii. of the Adv. of Learning, chap. 2. parab. 14.) concerning the ancient Essenes and Pythagoreans, and concerning some people now in the Mogul's country, and the present Turks, who are full of affection to brute creatures; and only observe that he looks upon the latter part of the same verse, as a kind of caution added by the wise man; lest we should think he patronizes all sort of mercy and compassion. "No, the mercy which spares wicked persons from being cut off by the hand of justice, is not mercy, but more cruel than cruelty itself. For cruelty is exercised upon single persons only: but this kind of mercy, by the grant of impunity, arms the whole band of impious men against the innocent." So, by the *mercies of the wicked,* he understands *mercy shewn to the wicked:* which is an unusual form of speech, and disagreeing to the opposition which the wise man, in this proverbial saying, makes between the righteous and the wicked. And therefore, it is not to be embraced, nor to be looked upon as a true exposition: in which, though I believe he followed Drusius, yet he hath very little company besides. And the sense rather lies as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase: in which, if I have added more than interpreters do, I am confident it will appear to him that considers not to be without reason. For these words, *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel,*

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seem to me to have the same sense with that proverbial speech among the Greeks, Ἐχθρῶν δῶρα ἄδωρα.

In the twelfth verse I have expressed both senses of which the word *mezod* is capable: which signifies both a *net* and a *fortress*. And so I have done in the next, (ver. 13.) which may be rendered two ways. Either, that by *prevaricating with his lips, a wicked man lays snares*, or [c] that *he is himself ensnared by his prevarications*. In the same manner I have comprehended more senses than one, in several other verses; which, if I should particularly mention, it would enlarge this preface beyond its just length. Else I should have made some remarks upon ver. 15. where the danger of self-love and self-conceit is represented: which hath ever this effect, that it makes men slight, if not reject, good counsel; out of a vain opinion, that none can advise them better than themselves: which is to follow the direction of a fool. For it is as certain a note of folly to rely wholly upon a man's own judgment, as it is of prudence to hearken to the advice of others.

Ver. 1. *WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.*] It is an excellent sign that a man will be wise and good, who not only patiently bears with those that tell him of his faults, but loves and is thankful for reproof: which he, who not only declines, but hates, and is thereby enraged, gives way to such brutish passions and desires, that there is little hope he should ever be a man.

Ver. 2. *A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.*] He that studies how to do good to others, attracts the good-will and blessing of the Lord upon himself: but he who contrives mischievous designs, under a specious show of religion and the public good, shall be judged by him who knows the heart, to suffer what he deserves.

Ver. 3. *A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.*] For no man, though never so subtle or powerful, shall be able to establish himself and his family, who lays the foundation of his greatness in wickedness: but the righteous, like a tree that hath taken a deep root in the earth, though shaken with storms and tempests, shall remain unmoveable in a flourishing estate.

Ver. 4. *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.*] A wife that strenuously employs herself in her domestic affairs, and can prudently command her own passions and desires, is a singular ornament and honour to her husband; who may well glory in his happiness: but she whose laziness, or lasciviousness, or other infamous quality, makes him hang down his head for shame, is an incurable grief and vexation, consuming him and all that he hath.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.*] The designs of good men are managed with exact justice and truth: but the contrivances of the wicked are carried on with fraud, dissimulation, and all manner of deceit.

Ver. 6. *The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.*] Nay (such is the height of their wickedness), they consult one with another, and lay plots to take away secretly the life of those who stand in the way of their designs: but men sincerely good give the best advice they can to deliver such innocent persons from their bloody snares.

Ver. 7. *The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.*] And God befriends them also; who not only defeats those wicked projectors in their designs, but so totally overthrows them and their families, that no footstep of them remains: whereas, he not only continues, but settles, the just man's family in a durable succession, (as I have often said, ver. 3. x. 25. 30. xi. 35.) when they that assaulted them are quite extinct.

Ver. 8. *A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.*] True prudence directing a man to effect his ends by fair and honest means, will procure him the greatest esteem, and the most lasting praise: but he who contrives by fraud, and such-like crooked ways, to attain his aim, shall fall into utter contempt, and be scorned by all as a foolish knave.

Ver. 9. *He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.*] He is far happier who makes no show in the world, but hath a competent estate, than he who appears in great splendour and pomp abroad, but wants bread to eat when he is at home.

Ver. 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*] A good man takes care that his beast be well used, and have food and rest convenient for it; which is more than men bent upon wickedness will do for their neighbours: for their very kindnesses, being treacherous, are a cruel cheat; nay, the highest expressions which they make of tenderness and compassion (whereby they induce others to repose a trust in them) are intended merely as a cover for the mischief they mean more securely to do them. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 11. *He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.*] He that takes pains in an honest employment, suppose in tilling his land, shall find it requite him with sufficient, if not plentiful provision for himself and his family: but he that is idle, falling into the company of loose and wicked persons, will find at last (by the desperate courses into which they will lead him) that he wants not only bread, but understanding.

Ver. 12. *The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.*] The wicked desires two things; first, to do as much mischief as he can by his wiles and arts of deceiving; and then to be secure in his wickedness: but the righteous make every body the better for them; and thereby enjoy that safety, which the other have only in their wishes and desires.

Ver. 13. *The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.*] The wicked ensnares himself by that deceitful talk wherewith he designed to have ensnared others: but the righteous escapes the danger; nay, by his prudent discourse, avoids very great difficulties wherein otherways he might have been entangled. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 14. *A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.*] There is no man gives good counsel and advice (especially in public affairs) but he shall reap

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the fruit of it abundantly himself: and there is no good work he doth for the benefit of others, but God will requite it, and make it turn to his own good account.

Ver. 15. *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*] A fool is so conceited that he consults nobody but himself; for whatsoever he doth, in his own opinion he is always in the right: but a wise man will not rely upon his own judgment alone; but, suspecting himself, makes use of the sound advice of other men.

Ver. 16. *A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.*] A fool (like a beast) is no sooner provoked but he grows angry; and, which is worse, it appears immediately in his countenance, words, and actions: whereas a prudent man is not unseemly transported by his passion; but stifles his resentments, even of the most reproachful injuries that are done him.

Ver. 17. *He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*] He that freely and boldly speaks the truth, and all the truth, and nothing but the truth, demonstrates himself an honest man, and doth justice unto others: but he that conceals the truth or forges falsehoods, and testifies unto lies, declares himself both a deceitful and mischievous person.

Ver. 18. *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*] A cut-throat is not more pernicious than he; and they are not much better, whose business it is, by secret calumnies, to wound the reputation of their neighbours, or to make discords and divisions among them: which a good man uses all his skill to cure; persuading them to love, unity, and peace.

Ver. 19. *The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.*] He that speaks the truth (being always conformable to himself) hath this advantage, that he can never be disproved, nor consequently discredited: but a liar, though he may at present be believed, is soon confuted; for he is apt to contradict himself, and blast his own reputation for ever.

Ver. 20. *Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.*] They do but deceive themselves, who look for any satisfaction from dissensions and disturbances; which they cannot contrive without much fear and anxiety of mind: but, as they are always cheerful who consult nothing but peace, concord, and happy settlement, so they will have great joy, whatsoever the issue be, of such good designs.

Ver. 21. *There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.*] For the Divine providence takes a peculiar care of good men, to avert the harm that the iniquity of the wicked intends them: which shall fall upon themselves in such abundance, as to overwhelm them.

Ver. 22. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.*] It is thought no great matter if a man break his word, or any way deceive his neighbour; but know, that this is a thing exceeding hateful to the Divine Majesty: and, on the contrary, they that faithfully perform their promises, and in all things deal truly with their neighbours, are no less acceptable to him. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 23. *A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.*] A prudent man conceals his knowledge, and will not make a show of being so wise as really he is: but a fool publishes his ignorance, as if he was ambitious that every one should know he is a fool.

Ver. 24. *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.*] He that taketh pains in an honest employment, shall take his ease at last; nay, raise himself to dominion and power; but he whose sloth makes him live by sharking and deceit, shall bring that toil upon himself which he would avoid, when his poverty and villany have reduced him to be a slave.

Ver. 25. *Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good work maketh it glad.*] Anxious cares and solicitude how to live depress the spirit of a man, otherwise magnanimous: but the kind and encouraging discourses of a friend (much more the gracious promises of God) erect it, nay, make it glad.

Ver. 26. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.*] As in other things, so in this, a righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour, that he doth not delude himself with vain hopes; nor miss his end, as the wicked doth in all his designs.

Ver. 27. *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.*] There is nothing more vile than a lazy fellow that lives by cheating; who, if he catch, shall not be able to keep his prey: but he is a valuable man, who by honest diligence getteth wealth, which shall durably remain with him.

Ver. 28. *In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.*] True goodness leads unto endless prosperity and happiness: nor is there any one action of virtue that tends to make a man miserable; as all manner of wickedness doth.

CHAP. XIII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter begins as the foregoing did, with an admonition about receiving instruction and reproof with due regard to them; especially from parents, who cannot be thought to intend any thing but the good of their children.

And as he did there, so here again the wise man gives fresh advice about the *government of the tongue*, about *diligence* and *industry:* and hath several observations, not much different from what he made before, of the advantage which the righteous have of the wicked in a great many instances, which are easy to observe in the Paraphrase.

And in the eighth verse he seems to me to teach [*a*] *contentedness of mind;* by shewing that the poor have a great advantage of the rich in an evil time. Some, indeed, take the sentence quite otherways, as if the wise man intended to represent the great advantage rich men have of the poor, in this sense: A rich man, when he fears any evil from his enemies, can divert it by a sum of money: but a poor man, when he is threatened, dare not stay, but runs away: and others there are who go a middle way, and think he intends to shew, that each of them has his advantages of several kinds. But considering the opposition that is usual in this book, between one

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part of the verse and the other, this seems not to be the meaning: yet I have mentioned it, that they who do not take the opposition to lie as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase, may have their choice, and follow which sense they like best. As for that of Clemens Alexandrinus, lib. iii. Pædagog. cap. 7. who thus glosses upon the former part of the verse, ἐὰν πλουτῇ, μεταδόσει σωθήσεται, *if a man be rich, he shall be saved by giving away to those in want;* it doth not answer to the opposite part of the verse, unless we should interpret it thus: As for the poor, they shall have no rebuke for not giving, because they have nothing to give. But I look upon this as not genuine; though his admonition upon this occasion be excellent, which is this: He that earnestly presses to go up to heaven must καλὴν βακτηρίαν τὴν εὐεργεσίαν περιφέρειν, *carry about with him that good staff of beneficence;* and by relieving those that are afflicted, partake himself of true rest and refreshment.

Which it is impossible to find any way but in [*b*] virtuous courses, as the fifteenth verse suggests to us; the sense of which, according to the plain import of the Hebrew words, I have expressed in the Paraphrase. But as the last part of it sounds in our language, it will not be incongruous to take the meaning of the whole thus:—If a man have understanding enough to be thoroughly good, he will find things favourable to his honest desires; but they that take evil courses meet with great difficulties, and are forced to go backward and forward, and wind and turn every way, to bring about their ends, or save themselves, perhaps, from ruin.

[c] There are several other notable sentences in this chapter, upon which, if I should enlarge, it would be to write a book. The only two which Melancthon singled out for the observation of his scholars, are, the one of them in ver. 10. concerning *pride*. Upon which he remembers them of the Greek proverb, Ὄρος ὄρει οὐ μίγνυται, *a mountain cannot mix with a mountain; i. e.* two high men will never agree together: and of another excellent saying among the Latins, "Crede mihi, sapere, est non multum sapere;" *believe me, to be wise, is not to be over-wise.* For they whose minds are infected with a vain opinion of themselves, either cannot see the truth, if it be against their thoughts, or, if they do, they will not acknowledge it, for fear they should yield, and confess themselves overcome.

[*d*] The other is ver. 23. the latter part of which he renders differently from all that I have read. *There is much food in the furrows of the poor; et alii sine modo cumulant,* and *others heap up without any measure;* that is, to no purpose, when a little will suffice. Which is a wise saying, but not agreeable to the Hebrew text.

I shall only add, that as the chapter begins with an admonition to hearken to reproof (especially from parents), which is repeated again in the middle, ver. 13. 18. so it concludes, [*e*] in the last verse but one, with an advice to parents not to spare the rod, if reproof will not do: which is but necessary in very young children; because there is no other means, perhaps, to make them understand the difference between good and evil, decent and unseemly; but only to make them smart for the one, and to give them some sensible pleasure for the other. Some children there are, are so disposed, that they must be thus treated: and it seems a wonderful piece of wisdom in the old Lacedemonians (as Plutarch relates in his Laconical Institutes), that, out of an universal love and care for each other's good, made it lawful for any man to correct the child of another person, if he saw him do amiss. And if the child complained of it to his father, it was looked upon as a fault in the father if he did not correct him again for making that complaint. Such was their confidence in each other, that every man being as much concerned for another man's children as for his own, would never do them any injury, nor unreasonably check them without cause. For this is the character Plutarch gives of them; that they did not, as in other cities, "look every man only after his own children, servants, and cattle; but every man looked upon what was his neighbour's as his own, ὅπως ὅτι μάλιστα κοινωνῶσι καὶ φροντίζωσιν ὡς ἰδίων, that there might be, as much as was possible, a communion among them, and they might take care of what belonged to others, as if they were their own proper goods."

Ver. 1. *A WISE son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*] A good child will reverently receive and obey both the instruction and reprehension of his father: but there is no hope of him that laughs and scoffs when he is admonished or chidden for his faults.

Ver. 2. *A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.*] He that speaks well of others, or gives them faithful counsel, shall reap the benefit thereof himself: and so shall they that perfidiously calumniate or deceive them, suffer themselves that injury which they desired to do their neighbours.

Ver. 3. *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.*] It is worth a man's pains to watch over his tongue; for he that carefully observes every word he speaks, preserves himself from much trouble and danger: but he that blunts out every thing that comes into his head, not minding what he saith, is in the ready way to ruin.

Ver. 4. *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*] There is nothing gotten by sloth, neither riches nor learning; which he in vain desires that will not labour for them: but the diligent and industrious shall never want satisfaction, but enjoy, perhaps, a great deal more than he desired.

Ver. 5. *A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.*] A good man not only avoids, but hates, all manner of falsehood, both in word and deed: but the wicked delights to abuse others with such abominable lies and frauds, as make him no less loathsome than a stinking carcass; and so contemptible, that he dare not shew his face for shame.

Ver. 6. *Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.*] The justice of all honest and upright designs will be a sufficient security to them: but all wicked contrivances are overthrown by their own iniquity.

Ver. 7. *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.*] You will be deceived, if you judge of men by the outward appearance; for there are those who have the vanity to make a great show in the world, when they are not

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worth a farthing: and others, who are so cunning as to dissemble their vast estates under the garb of poverty.

Ver. 8. *The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.*] Rich men are not always so happy as they are imagined; for their wealth sometimes only serves to make them accused of high crimes, and then to bring them off with a huge sum of money, which they pay to save their lives: but nobody is apt to find fault with the poor, or to bring any charge against them. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.*] The happiness of the just is great and illustrious, like the light of the sun, and increases still to their endless joy: but the happiness of the wicked is weak and dim, like the light of a candle, and will at last be utterly extinguished.

Ver. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well-advised is wisdom.*] They that have a high conceit of themselves, and will yield to none, declare their folly, in that they can do nothing without strife and contention: but they that are so humble as to be advised by others, do all things prudently, in quietness and peace. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 11. *Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*] Wealth ill-gotten (by lying, gaming, cheating, &c.) soon wastes away: but what is gotten by honest labour, swells to a greater heap, which moulders not, but still increases.

Ver. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*] The delay of that which a man eagerly expects is such an affliction, that it differs little from a lingering disease: but when he enjoys what he hath long looked for, it restores him presently to his former vigour and liveliness.

Ver. 13. *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.*] He that despises the good admonitions or counsels that are given him, is his own enemy, and destroys himself: but he that reverently submits to the Divine commandments, makes God his friend, who will reward him for it.

Ver. 14. *The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*] The instructions of a good man ought to be as a law to him that receives them; for, like the water of a perpetual spring, they are most beneficial; especially to preserve him from those pernicious and destructive principles whereby too many are ensnared.

Ver. 15. *Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.*] A prudent, pious, and regular behaviour, is most amiable and acceptable to all men: but the conversation of such as live by no law but their own lusts, like rough way, is grievously uneasy. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 16. *Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.*] All prudent persons are so cautious not to discredit themselves, that they undertake nothing but with due deliberation, and what they understand: but a fool discovers his weakness to be greater than was thought, by rash meddling with matters out of his reach.

Ver. 17. *A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.*] A messenger, or a minister, that wickedly betrays his trust, is so injurious to his prince, or him that employs him, that he shall not escape a just punishment: but he that faithfully discharges this office (healing suppose, or preventing, differences and breaches) procures safety to himself, as well as to the person that used his service.

Ver. 18. *Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.*] He that proudly rejects instruction, and disdains to be checked in his lewd courses, is likely to be a beggar, and exposed to the public scorn: but he that is so humble as to give a due regard to reproof, and to correct his errors, not only gains a just esteem, but is likely to rise unto dignity and honour.

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.*] It is a high satisfaction to enjoy what we earnestly desire: but fools herein defeat themselves; being so wedded to their wickedness, that they will not quit it, if that must be the condition of their being so happy.

Ver. 20. *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*] He that keeps company with wise and good men is likely to be so himself; that is, to be happy: but he who associates himself with the wicked shall be as certainly ruined as he will be unavoidably infected with their wickedness.

Ver. 21. *Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid.*] The wickedness of sinners pursues them to their unavoidable destruction: and the good which righteous men do, will infallibly return into their own bosom, and reward them with many blessings.

Ver. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children; and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.*] A man that doeth good with his estate takes the surest course to settle it upon his posterity for many generations: but the wealth of him who regards nothing but his own sinful lusts and pleasures, shall be transferred from his family unto one that is truly virtuous.

Ver. 23. *Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.*] A poor man many times makes a plentiful provision for himself and his family, out of a few acres of land; which he manages judiciously and honestly: but there is a sort of men whose larger estates are wasted; either for want of skill to improve their ground, or because they do not pay the hireling his wages. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 24. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*] Fond affection, which maketh a parent forbear to chastise his child for the faults that cannot otherwise be amended, is no better than hatred; for it helps to undo him: therefore he that truly loves his child must not be so indulgent; but as soon as ill inclinations begin to appear, while he is tender and flexible, give him early correction as well as admonition, before he has accustomed himself to the doing evil. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 25. *The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.*] A righteous man never wants satisfaction, because his desires are moderate, and he lives in a temperate use of God's blessings: but wicked men, some of them, bring themselves to extreme poverty by their luxury and riot; and others of them are indigent even in the midst of the greatest abundance; because their desires are insatiable, and they never think they have enough.

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CHAP XIV.

ARGUMENT.

[a] As the foregoing chapter began with a description of a towardly child, so this with the character of a good mother of a family: who by her prudent care makes it flourish; when a lewd woman throws the house (as we say) out of the windows: for so the wise man observes: *She pulls down the house with her own hands;* that is, ruins the family without any other help. *There needs no more than a bad wife to undo a family.*

[b] A little after this (ver. 4.) there follows an admonition for the man without doors, as here for the woman within; that he do not neglect his husbandry. Of which *oxen*, every one knows, were the principal instruments: being not only employed in that country (as they are here) in ploughing the ground, and carrying home the crop, but also in treading out the corn. The strength also of the ox (which is here mentioned) is celebrated in all authors: and thence *bulls* are called *abbarim*, i. e. *robust*, among the Hebrews, who were very careful about the breeding of these most profitable creatures. It is not my business to inquire after the difference between *alaphim* and *sor* (which we render here, in this verse, by the same English word), but certain it is, they are used promiscuously for either sex; and the latter without any respect to age: though most commonly it signifies one grown to maturity, which we call an *ox*.

[c] Upon the next verse but one, (ver. 6.) the Lord Bacon (in his seventh book of the Adv. of Learning, chap. 2.) hath made this useful gloss: "He that comes to seek after knowledge, with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter enough for his humour, but none for his instruction." One reason of which is, that this humour of deriding all things, springs from a great pride and conceit of their own wit, which disposes them to seek for wisdom, not from others, but wholly from themselves: and so (as the wise man observes) they are not likely to find it where it is not to be had. When he that attributes less to himself, and hath the humility to listen to instruction, in a short time attains great wisdom. I cannot wholly omit the opinion of Jansenius; who thinks the wise man means, that he who hath accustomed himself to laugh at all wholesome counsel, and in some strait or other begins to think what is best to do, commonly finds himself at such a loss, that he cannot see his way out of it. And it may be applied to those also, who having mocked at religion all their days, at last desire to understand it; but cannot, through their own inveterate indisposition to it.

[d] In the next verse I have joined these two senses together, which it may have according to the different acceptation of the word *minneged*, signifying either *before*, or *from before*.

[e] The next, (ver. 8.) I take to be that, which the Lord Bacon, minding the sense rather than the words, thus translates, (Advancement of Learning, book viii. chap. 2. parab. 30.) "Prudens advertit ad gressus suos, stultus divertit ad dolos." Which his English translator (who refers this to Prov. xxvii. 12. which is quite to another purpose) reads thus, *A wise man is weary of his way, a cunning fool seeks evasions.* Upon which that lord thus descants: "There be two sorts of wisdom; the one *true* and *sound*, the other *counterfeit* and *false:* which last Solomon doubts not to call folly. He that applies himself to the former, takes heed to his own ways and footings, foreseeing dangers, studying remedies, using the assistance of good men, and fortifying himself against the wicked: wary how he enters upon a business; and not unprepared for a retreat, and how he may come off handsomely; attend upon advantages, courageous against impediments, with innumerable other things that relate to the government of his own ways and actions. But that other kind of wisdom is made up altogether of fallacies and cunning devices; and relies wholly upon the hopes of circumventing others, and framing them as he list himself. This wisdom the parable rejects not only as wicked, but as foolish. For, first, it is not in the number of things which are in our own power, nor is it directed by any constant rule; but new stratagems must be every day devised, the old failing and growing useless. And, secondly, as soon as ever a man hath got the name, and the opinion of a cunning, crafty companion, he hath deprived himself utterly of the principal instrument for the management of his affairs, which is *trust:* and so he will find by experience all things to go cross to his desires. For, lastly, these arts and shifts, however they promise fair, and much please such as practise them, yet they are commonly frustrated, and, which is worse, end sadly." Which Tacitus hath well observed in these remarkable words: "Consilia callida et audacia, expectatione læta, tractatu dura, eventu tristia:" *Crafty and audacious counsels are joyful in the expectation, difficult in the management, and sad in the event.*

[f] There is the same difficulty in the ninth verse that was in the seventh: for the word *jaliz* is translated by some *mock*, by others *excuse:* and so (besides what I have comprehended in my Paraphrase) there may be this sense of the words: Fools endeavour to make handsome apologies for their fault, and to find out colourable excuses; but upright men freely confess them, and easily grant a pardon for them, and make up the difference which they raise in a friendly manner. Or if we retain the acception of *mocking*, this may be the sense of the verse: Fools laugh and jeer at those who have committed a sin; but good men pity them, and by kind reproofs seek their amendment. I know not how otherwise to make out the opposition, which is usual between one part of the verse and the other, unless we choose to take it thus: That when fools offend God in the highest manner, they make nothing of it; but if good men in the least offend, they presently beg his pardon, and seek his grace and favour. The former part of the sentence also may be inverted, and make this plain obvious sense; which is as natural as any: Sin will expose those to scorn, who are so foolish as to commit it: and then the latter part is as plain: But the upright will have favour both with God and man. A good admonition to them that make a mock of sin; which will in time make a mock of them, and expose them as ridiculous fools.

[g] Some take the next (ver. 10.) to be an admonition to a prudent man, that he should conceal both his grief and his joy; and keep them to himself. But it is rather an

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advice to every one, not to censure too heavily the passions of grief or of joy in others, because the causes of them may be unknown to us. Or we may look upon the former part of the verse, as an admonition to those that are at ease, not to censure too severely the complaints of those that are in pain or trouble; and the latter part as an admonition to such as are delivered from trouble, to be more thankful than any one can exhort them to be, because they best know what reason they have for it.

[*h*] The next verse but one (ver. 12.) is the only sentence which Melancthon points out to his scholars, as most remarkable in this chapter. Which he takes to be an admonition of the weakness of men's judgment, and all human counsels: which mistake lamentably, and lead men frequently into ruin. According to that saying of Simonides, τὸ δοκεῖν βιάζεται τὴν ἀλήθειαν, *Shows and seeming appearances do violence to truth*, or *Truth is forced to give way to the mere show of it:* and that other, πολλάκι τὴν μόρφην ἐξαπατῶσ' ἰδέαι, *Shadows too oft cheat us of the reality*. Against which there is no remedy but the word of God, and invoking his direction: according to such sayings as these, *Thy word is a light to my feet*, &c. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, and trust in him, and he will bring it to pass. This shall be your wisdom, to walk in my precepts*, (Deut. iv.)

[*i*] And as some are deceived by their own counsels, so others by the counsel of flatterers; if they be so simple as to believe every one that pretends to kindness, (ver. 15.) Where Bochartus notes very appositely, that "as prudence without simplicity degenerates into craft; so simplicity without prudence is no better than mere fatuity."

[*k*] In like manner the wise man observes, (ver. 23.) that talking without doing is vain, and to no purpose; but only to be a cover perhaps for idleness. As the Lord Bacon (Advanc. of Learning, book viii. chap. 11. parab. 28.) glosses upon that verse in these words: "Solomon here separates the fruit of the labour of the tongue and of the labour of the hands, as if want was the revenue of the one, and wealth the revenue of the other. For it commonly comes to pass, that they who talk liberally, boast much, and promise mighty matters, are beggars; and receive no benefit by their bags, or by any thing they discourse of. Nay, rather for the most part such men are not industrious and diligent in their employment; but only feed and fill themselves with words, as with wind. Certainly, as the poet says, *Qui silet, est firmus*. He that is conscious to himself of proficiency in his endeavours, contents himself with inward applause in his own breast and holds his peace: but he who knows within himself that he only hunts after vain-glory, and hath nothing else to live upon, talks abundantly, and reports wonders unto others."

There are several other remarkable things in the rest of the chapter; but this preface is already so long, that I shall only touch upon one, (ver. 34.)

[*l*] Where they seem to me to have translated the Hebrew most exactly, who take the word *chesed*, in the ordinary sense of it, for *mercy* or *clemency;* not for *reproach*, which it never signifies, unless, perhaps, once, (Lev. xx. 17.) of which there may be a just doubt made. As for the *chattaah*, nobody doubts but it signifies a *sin-offering*, as well as *sin;* yet with respect to our translation, I have endeavoured to express both senses of those two words in my Paraphrase.

Ver. 1. *EVERY wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*] He hath a great treasure, whosoever he be, that hath a wise and virtuous wife; for she alone, by her diligence and prudent administration, is able to raise her family, and increase its riches and reputation: but she that is foolish, and void of goodness, by her negligence, ill management, and luxury, without any other assistance, will lay it low, and waste all that hath been gotten by her predecessors' care. See Arg. [*a*].

Ver. 2. *He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.*] He that sincerely discharges his duty in all the actions of his life, hath a due regard and reverence to the Lord; from which all virtue flows: but he that cares not what he doth, so he doth but satisfy his own lusts and passions, lives in a profane contempt of his majesty; which is the very fountain of all wickedness.

Ver. 3. *In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.*] A fool is so insolent that he boldly calumniates and wounds the reputation of others, though it comes home at last, with a terrible backblow, upon himself; but wise men are careful of their words, not to offend, much less abuse, the meanest person; and thereby they remain in safety.

Ver. 4. *Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.*] If the fields lie fallow and be neglected, a famine must needs follow: but good husbandry bestowed upon them makes great plenty. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 5. *A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.*] A person of integrity will not be prevailed withal, either for fear or favour, to justify the least untruth: but a man of no conscience, who hath accustomed himself to lying, cares not how many falsehoods he testifies; which he utters without any difficulty.

Ver. 6. *A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.*] He that scoffs and jeers at every thing he reads or hears, would be thought wise; but loses all his pains, which perhaps he takes to be so: when a serious person, who doth not think himself too wise to learn, easily and quickly attains the knowledge of things necessary and useful for him. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 7. *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.*] Observe a fool (and a wicked man is no better) as diligently as thou pleasest, and thou shalt never learn any good from him; and therefore it is best to flee the company of such persons, whose discourse thou perceivest tends to nothing but vice and mischief. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 8. *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.*] The greatest cunning and subtilty that a truly wise and good man studies, is to understand what he ought to do, and what to avoid, upon all occasions: but all the skill of wicked men, such is their folly, lies in cheating tricks, and in devising arts of circumvention and deceit. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 9. *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.*] Lewd men, as if it were but a sport,

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care not what injury they do their neighbours, and when they have done, laugh at those that talk to them of making satisfaction: but among men exactly virtuous, there is nothing but good-will, which makes them live without offence, or presently reconcile themselves to those they have offended. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 10. *The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.*] Nobody can know what another suffers, so well as he himself: and he alone is privy to the greatness of that joy which springs from the happy conclusion of his sufferings. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 11. *The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.*] Men of sincere integrity are happier in a mean cottage, than the wicked are in their palaces: for, when the great and potent families of those wicked men are overturned, the despicable family of the sincerely pious shall flourish and grow illustrious.

Ver. 12. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.*] Examine every thing strictly and impartially, and be not led merely by thy appetite; for that makes many actions seem innocent, which, in the issue, prove deadly destructive. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 13. *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*] Do not think that every one that laughs is merry, or that profuse and immoderate joy is true pleasure; for it leaves the heart more heavy and sad afterward, especially when the mind reflects upon it: nay, such is the vanity of this present life, there is no joy without a mixture of sorrow; which ofttimes treads so close upon its heels, that it immediately follows.

Ver. 14. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*] He that, to avoid a danger, revolts from those virtuous courses, unto which he knows he ought to have adhered, shall bring upon himself misery enough, by his own devices: but a truly good man is, even in this, far superior to him, that though he should suffer, his own integrity, and the clearness and quietness of his conscience, give him abundant satisfaction.

Ver. 15. *The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*] It is a mark of great silliness to be credulous; that is, to take all those for friends who make profession of it, and easily to follow every one's advice: for a prudent man is suspicious, and proceeds cautiously; examining before he trusts, and considering well, before he does as he is advised. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 16. *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.*] A wise man being admonished of his error, and of his danger, is afraid of incurring the Divine displeasure; and instantly starts back from that evil way, into which he was entering, or wherein he was engaged: but a fool storms at those that would stop him in his course, and proceeds boldly and securely to his own ruin.

Ver. 17. *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly; and a man of wicked devices is hated.*] He whose anger is presently kindled, and breaks out when he is offended, may do such things, when the fit is upon him, as none but a fool would be guilty of; but he is nothing so bad as him, who, suppressing his wrath, lets it boil in his breast, and deliberately contrives how to take a cruel revenge: for most men are inclined to pity the weakness of him that is hasty, but this man's wickedness is odious and execrable unto all.

Ver. 18. *The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.*] Inconsiderate men will never leave their folly, till they feel the woful effects of it: but they who are cautious, and advised, will heartily embrace all the means of instruction, and endeavour to arrive at the perfection of knowledge; which will prove a singular ornament and glory to them.

Ver. 19. *The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.*] Evil-doers had best not be insolent in their prosperity; for they may not only be brought low, but have been seen to humble themselves before the face of those good men, whom they had oppressed; the most impious of them, that stuck at nothing which would support them in their wickedness, have been forced to wait as humble supplicants at the gate of that just man (whom they despised and abused), and implore his favour and relief.

Ver. 20. *The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.*] There is little sincere kindness left in the world; for if a man fall into poverty, his near neighbour, nay, even he that professed friendship to him before, not only forsakes him, but hates his company; but if a man grow very rich (let it be by what means it will) there are many that before took no notice of him, who will pretend to love him; nay, the greatest persons offer him their favour.

Ver. 21. *He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.*] But let such men know that it is a greater sin than they imagine, and shall be severely punished, to overlook their poor neighbour, and deny him their charitable relief: which whosoever compassionately affords him, not only doth a good deed, but shall be amply rewarded for it.

Ver. 22. *Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.*] Need I tell you (when it is so known a truth) that they miss their end, and do but contrive their own ruin, who carry on mischievous designs against the innocent: but they that take the same pains to study how to do men good, shall never fail of that bountiful reward, which is secured to them by the faithful promise of God.

Ver. 23. *In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.*] If a man take pains in any honest employment, though never so mean, it will bring him in some profit: but to spend one's time in talking only, and perhaps boasting what he can do, tends to nothing but to make a man a beggar. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 24. *The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.*] Riches are a singular advantage and ornament to a wise and virtuous man, who knows how to use them: but such is the folly of wicked men, that their wealth makes them the more vile, and only gives them the greater means to shew what senseless fools they are.

Ver. 25. *A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.*] An upright man will not fear to endanger himself in justifying the truth, to save the lives of those that are falsely accused: but false and deceitful men boldly pour out lies and calumnies, though thereby they destroy the innocent.

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Ver. 26. *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge.*] A religious care to please the Lord in all things, gives a man the firmest resolution, and the strongest confidence of security and protection in all dangers: and his children after him may flee to God for safety, and hope to fare the better for their pious father's sake.

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*] There is nothing makes a man live so comfortably and happily, as this religious care to avoid every thing offensive to his majesty; which, like a perpetual spring, gives endless satisfaction; and diverts a man from those dangerous ways, wherein others are entangled to their utter destruction.

Ver. 28. *In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.*] The honour and splendour of a king, depend upon the multitude, wealth, and strength, of his subjects; whom, therefore, he ought to cherish: for if they be wasted by unnecessary wars, or forced into other countries by oppression and unjust exactions, it proves the ruin of his kingdom.

Ver. 29. *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.*] He declares himself to be a great man, and to abound with prudence, who is not soon provoked to anger by reproaches or ill usage: by which, if a man be hastily inflamed, he exposes his folly, and makes it apparent to every body.

Ver. 30. *A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.*] There is nothing conduces more to health and happiness, than a quiet, gentle, and contented mind; but envy, and such-like fretful passions, is as miserable a torment and consuming disease as rottenness in the bones.

Ver. 31. *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker: he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.*] He that defrauds or oppresses the poor, forgets God, who can reduce him to the same condition; nay, affronts his majesty, who hath promised to be the defender of such helpless people: therefore whosoever hath any respect to God, will be so far from injuring, that he will shew mercy, and do good to him that is needy.

Ver. 32. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.*] When a wicked man falls into calamity, his heart fails him, and he is driven away from all his confidants, like the chaff before the wind, by the consciousness of his own wickedness; but a righteous man is not dismayed in the greatest dangers; but remains steady and confident, even in death itself.

Ver. 33. *Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.*] A prudent person makes no unseasonable demonstration of his wisdom; but lets it lie quiet in his own mind, till there be a fitting opportunity to do good with it; whereas fools cannot contain themselves, but presently vent whatsoever they know, though never so small, in every company whereinto they come.

Ver. 34. *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*] Justice and piety raise a nation to the highest degree of prosperity and glory, especially when mercy, humanity, and kindness, even unto strangers and enemies, are joined with them: which pacifies the Divine anger, and turns away many calamities; which the contrary sins bring down upon a people, till they make them vile and miserable. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 35. *The king's favour is towards a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.*] A prudent and dexterous minister of state, who understands his business, and is faithful in it, must needs be very acceptable to his prince: whose anger nothing more provokes, than one who regards not his master's honour, but, by his ill management, disgraces his government, and brings all things into confusion.

CHAP. XV.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter begins with that aphorism, which [*a*] the Lord Bacon (Advancement of Learning, book viii. chap. 2.) hath set in the front of all those which he hath culled out of this book; for an example of that sort of wisdom which is to be exercised in business, upon various occasions. And he applies it particularly to a man's behaviour towards a prince, or other great person, when he is angry with him. "Two things (saith he) Solomon advises in this case: the one is, that *an answer be made;* the other, that *it be soft.* The first of which contains three precepts. First, that you *beware of a sad and sullen silence;* which either charges the fault wholly upon yourselves, or impeaches your master of injustice, as if his ears were not open to a just defence. Secondly, that you *beware of delaying the answer,* and of craving longer time for your defence; because that plainly betrays you are devising some cunning and counterfeit apology, having no present answer. Thirdly, that by all means *an answer be made:* an *answer,* I say, not a mere *confession* or *submission;* but with some sprinklings of an excuse let fall here and there. For it is not safe to bear yourself otherways, unless you have to deal with very generous and noble dispositions, which are rare. But then, this answer (which is the second and principal thing here advised) must be very soft and temperate, not harsh and peremptory: for that will make the business worse than if it had never been meddled with at all; and increase that wrath which you should study to appease."

Melancthon also, I find, in his short lectures upon this book, commends this lesson very much to his scholars: but looks upon it as a general precept for the preservation of peace, and avoiding unnecessary contentions; which arise out of pride, ambition, morosity of nature, emulation, wrath, superstition; which move men either to give ill words, or to return worse to those that are given them; endeavouring to overcome by sharpness and bitterness, not by lenity and moderation. And the truth is, the Hebrew word we translate *answer,* signifies as well what is first said, as the reply to it. So that Solomon here gives this caution, that we should not think it enough, not to begin strife and contention; but if others begin it, we should not continue it by rough answers, but endeavour to make an end presently, by mollifying the matter, and yield much for the common tranquillity's sake. And he thinks it is a precept of the same nature with that of Pythagoras, *Stir not up fire with a*

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sword: and commends those excellent verses of Euripides:

Δυοῖν λεγόντων, θατέρου θυμουμένου,
Ὁ μὴ ἀντιτείνων τοῖς λόγοις σοφώτερος.

And next to this precept he commends to his scholars [*b*] that in ver. 8. which is all that he glosses upon in this chapter: and thinks it is *a caution against resting in ceremonious worship, without moral virtue.* Concerning which he says so many things, useful for these present times, that I cannot but here give the sum of them.

There are three sorts of works, saith he, mentioned by the prophets, concerning *ceremonies,* and concerning *moral virtue,* and concerning *faith.* For the first of these, *ceremonies,* or external signs, God instituted some for two causes: first, that they should be signs of the promises; secondly, that they should be the nerves of the public congregation: because God would not have his church be hid in obscurity, but be conspicuous and discerned from other nations, *voce et ceremoniis.* But here we must prudently consider how ceremonies are to be used; because men are prone to false worship, and especially to the abuse of ceremonies: which they take for righteousness, and think thereby to merit remission of sin: which persuasion spread itself largely among mankind, in the heathen world, among the pharisaical Jews, and in the Roman church. Yet the wiser heathen themselves corrected this error, of trusting to ceremonies without moral good works. Plato, for instance, saith, that *God loves worshippers,* οὐ σχήμασι τεχνάζοντας, ἀλλ' ἀληθείᾳ τιμῶντας ἀρετήν, *not that can artificially compliment him with gestures and outward shows; but that in truth, honour, and virtue.* But the Scripture goes a great deal farther; and teaches us also to add *faith in God, and in our Lord Jesus Christ. Moral good works* will please God, when done for this end; not that we may merit thereby remission of sin, but that we may be obedient to God, and teach others to know him, and to celebrate him. And then also *ceremonies,* instituted by God, are pleasing to him, when they are done for this end, not to merit remission: but, because they are signs admonishing us of the promises, to stir up our faith; and likewise because they are *signa confessionis, signs of what religion we profess;* and, lastly, *quia sunt nervi congregationis,* because *they are the nerves whereby the congregation* of Christian people are joined together, and preserved in unity. These true ends, saith he, ought to be understood by the church, and impious opinions to be removed. And for such good ends, one would think none should question, much less quarrel with those few ceremonies, which our church hath appointed in God's service.

That this was his opinion also, appears in his commentaries upon the fiftieth Psalm: where he saith, that *even human ceremonies are, in some sort, the nerves of discipline;* and condemns only those that make them effectual for the remission of sin. But his mind is delivered most fully, in a discourse which I find in the second volume of his works, concerning the method of preaching: where he directs preachers to tell the people in general, that *all ceremonies are not to be abolished;* as appears by this, that then we must take away *baptism* and the *eucharist.* And if any one ask, what must be done with ceremonies instituted by man, he answers, *Some of them are necessary,* and therefore must be retained; as certain days, in which the word of God is taught; and certain rites in the church, such as that of singing psalms, and certain forms of communicating, &c.

But there are others not so necessary; what must be done with them? Must they be tolerated? He answers, Yes; if they be not impious, and if they be useful; either because they commend religion to the vulgar, or they are instructive to children, for whose sake they were chiefly instituted. N. B. For we see in some churches, where there are no ceremonies left but only the sacraments, that religion was never so contemptible as it is now. For there is need of external show, which may commend religion to the vulgar, and make it appear more venerable; because they cannot of themselves see its magnitude and dignity.

It is impious also, he resolves, to think that all ceremonies were instituted by wicked popes. No, there were some prudent and holy men, who perceived how supine and dull the minds of the vulgar were; that they would never be sensible of the dignity and amplitude of religion, unless their minds were both awakened and detained by some reverend solemn ceremonies; which might help to lift them up, and teach them to admire it.

These are his reasons why all ceremonies ought not to be abolished—because some are commanded; others necessary; and others, that are not, have no impiety in them, and are very profitable for weaker minds. Which I thought good here to insert; because the opinion of so great and wise a reformer, may weigh much with some persons who have little regard to us.

I have been so long in this, that I must but briefly mention two verses more: upon which the beforenamed Lord Bacon hath given some touches.

[*c*] The first is ver. 15. where by a *merry heart* he understands a good conscience, (Adv. of Learning, book vii. chap. 1.) and thus glosses: "A mind conscious of good intentions, though success be wanting, affords truer and purer joy, and to nature more agreeable, than all that this world can furnish a man withal, either for the enjoyment of his desires, or the repose of his mind." The words, indeed, of Solomon seem to be larger, and to extend unto all that are void of care, anxiety, and sorrow; but this is a pious sense, and may well be comprehended in them.

[*d*] The other place is ver. 9. the beginning of it; where he hath enlarged the sense farther than I have done in my Paraphrase (and the words will bear it) to this purpose, that *sloth in the conclusion proves laborious.* "For diligence and sedulous preparation level the way we are to go in any business, and remove impediments in our passage. But he that is slothful, and puts off all to the last point of execution, must needs perpetually, at every step, pass, as it were, through briars and thorns; which ever and anon entangle, detain, and hinder him in his proceedings. The same observation may be made concerning the government of a family, wherein if there be due care and providence used, all goes on cheerfully, and, as it were, of its own accord, without noise or tumult; but if those be wanting, when some greater occasion falls out, all matters throng in to

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be dispatched at once; the servants are in an uproar, the whole house rings, and there is nothing well done in that confusion.

[e] The two verses before this some have connected; but there is no necessity of it; though it be a great truth, that passionate men are apt to make disturbance even at feasts; which men of temperate spirits endeavour to appease, though affronts be offered them. According to that excellent advice of Seneca, *let dissension begin from others, but reconciliation from thee.* It is there observed by Bochartus, (lib. ii. de Animalibus Sacris. cap. 32. par. i.) that *herbs*, or, as some translate it, *green pottage*, was the poorest; and an ox put up into a stall, and there fatted (or, as the Talmudists understand the phrase, a *crammed ox*), the noblest entertainment in those countries. For it is reckoned among the provision made for the tables of Solomon and Nehemiah; and in the New Testament, the marriage provision which the king made at his son's wedding were *oxen and fatlings;* (Matt. xxi. 4.) and the *fatted calf* was brought forth to entertain the returning prodigal. And thus it was in other countries, as he observes out of Dioscorides; who notes, that Homer never sets any other cheer before his heroes but this; no, not at marriages or any other meeting: though he introduces Agamemnon often treating the princes of Greece.

Ver. 1. *A SOFT answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*] A mild, submissive, and yielding answer, to him who severely chides, pacifies wrath; and prevents the farther progress of it: but sharp, contemptuous, and saucy language, incenses it more, or raises a passion, where there was none before. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*] A wise man gives profitable instructions; and understands also how to speak so seasonably and prudently, that it shall make the knowledge he imparts both acceptable and useful: whereas fools have nothing but silly stuff to utter; or pour out their thoughts so indiscreetly and confusedly, that they only serve abundantly to declare their folly.

Ver. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*] There is nothing either in heaven or earth that can escape the knowledge of God: who is every where; and observes the most secret motions and actions of men, both good and bad.

Ver. 4. *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*] He that skilfully employs his tongue to give wholesome instructions, especially to heal differences and make peace, is an incomparable blessing to the place where he lives, and makes it a paradise: but he that abuses his tongue, to poison men with ill principles, to lie, to calumniate, to make bates, doth most miserably disturb mankind, and (like a blighting wind) blasts all the comforts of their life.

Ver. 5. *A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.*] He that regards not, or rejects, the instruction of his father, or tutor, or superior, whose love is equal to his authority, will always be a fool: but he that is willing to receive even rebukes, from whomsoever they come, and carefully observe them, hath already attained a great degree of wisdom; and prudently consults his own welfare and happiness.

Ver. 6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.*] A truly just and merciful man is very rich, whether he hath little or much; because he is well contented, and what he hath is likely to continue in his family: but there is much disquiet and trouble in the greatest revenues of the wicked; which can neither stay long with him, nor give him satisfaction while he enjoys them.

Ver. 7. *The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doth not so.*] Wise and good men are neither envious nor sparing of their pains to disperse their knowledge; which they freely communicate, and diligently propagate unto others; but evil men are such fools, that either they have nothing to impart, or no heart to do any good with what they have.

Ver. 8. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.*] It is impious to think to please God with mere gifts and sacrifices; which when they are presented from wicked men, who have no thought of amending their lives, are abominable to the Divine Majesty; but the very prayers of upright men, though they are not able to bring him any costly offerings, are exceeding acceptable, and prevail for great blessings from him. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 9. *The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.*] For the whole way of a wicked man, his designs, contrivances, and course of life, are all odious and abominable to the Lord; which make even his sacrifices no better: but he loves him, whose thoughts, affections, and endeavours, are earnestly bent to an unwearied pursuit of piety and virtue.

Ver. 10. *Correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way; and he that hateth reproof shall die.*] Sharp and grievous punishments shall be inflicted on him that forsakes the virtuous path in which he began to tread: for he is not easily reclaimed; because it is unpleasing to him to hear of his faults; and in time he hates reproof, and then must certainly perish.

Ver. 11. *Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men?*] The Lord is perfectly acquainted with things most hidden and secret to us; with the grave, the infernal places, and things perished and quite consumed: how much more therefore with the souls of all men living upon earth, if they have but so much as an intention or inclination to depart from him?

Ver. 12. *A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.*] A profane man, who makes a mock of God and of religion, loves not to argue with himself about such matters, and hates those that reprove him: which makes him avoid the acquaintance and society of wise and virtuous men, for fear he should meet with their reprehension.

Ver. 13. *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.*] When the mind of a man is inwardly satisfied and full of joy, it doth good to his body too; as appears in his cheerful countenance: but when grief and sorrow seize on the heart, they deject, enfeeble, and break the most courageous spirit.

Ver. 14. *The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.*] An intelligent man, who is heartily in love with wisdom,

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greedily seeks for solid knowledge: but men void of understanding gape after, and relish nothing but frivolous, vain, and unprofitable things; which are like meat and drink unto them.

Ver. 15. *All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.*] All the days of a poor man are full of anxiety and trouble; especially if, when any affliction befals him, he be discontented with his condition, and cannot bear with disappointments; but a good heart and cheerful spirit are a cure for this; especially, a mind conscious to itself of designing well, whatsoever the success prove, is a perpetual comfort, and a higher satisfaction than the most delicious banquet of the rich and prosperous. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 16. *Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.*] A small estate with the fear of offending the Divine Majesty by discontent, or any other sin, is much better than vast treasures with disquiet and confusion of thoughts; which (without a religious sense of God) are wont to attend upon abundance of wealth.

Ver. 17. *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.*] The meanest fare, with the love of him that invites, and with agreement among the guests, is much better than the most sumptuous entertainment of him that hates us; or among those that quarrel and contend, even then when all differences should be forgotten. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 18. *A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*] A man prone to wrath will easily disturb the most peaceable company, being apt to quarrel for very trifles: but a meek and patient person is so far from raising strife, that he will endeavour to compose it, when he finds it is begun by others.

Ver. 19. *The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.*] A slothful man, when he hath any thing to do, feigns to himself most grievous difficulties, which he fancies, or pretends, are impossible to be overcome: but those very things seem easy to the industry of honest-hearted men; who go on smoothly in their business, and conquer all impediments. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 20. *A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.*] A pious son (as hath been said before, x. 1. and cannot be repeated too often) is a great joy to his parents; especially to his father, who hopes he will support his name and family: but a wicked man is as great a grief unto them; especially to his mother (whose indulgence, perhaps, makes him more irreverent towards her), when he bears no regard to her; nay, despises her commands and admonitions, and makes her contemptible unto others.

Ver. 21. *Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.*] It is a pleasure (as was also said before, x. 23.) to a man void of consideration, to do the most absurd and wicked things: but he that understands himself, not only directs his thoughts, and takes the greatest care to live orderly and regularly; but feels it to be his highest satisfaction.

Ver. 22. *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.*] The necessity likewise of prudent counsellors is fit again to be repeated, (xi. 14.) for, if they be wanting, the best designs are likely to miscarry: but where there are a multitude of wise and virtuous men consulting for the public good, they will easily compass any thing; by foreseeing all difficulties, and providing against them.

Ver. 23. *A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth; and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!*] And it is a great pleasure to a man to give wholesome counsel; and a greater to see the good success of it: but the greatest of all (an inexpressible pleasure, both to himself and others), to have given it so seasonably, that a business was easily effected by it, which had not been done without it.

Ver. 24. *The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*] The way to be perfectly happy, a truly wise man sees, is to raise his thoughts, desires, and hopes above this earth, and to have respect to God in all his actions: which will make him truly noble and great; and preserve him both from all mean and base practices, and from the most horrid dangers here, and utter destruction hereafter.

Ver. 25. *The Lord will destroy the house of the proud; but he will establish the border of the widow.*] Trust not in riches and power, but in the great Lord of the world, who possesses and disposes all things; for he will overturn the family of haughty men (who, forgetting him, trample upon their inferiors), though never so strongly supported: but will preserve the poor widow, who hath no helper, in her right, when such insolent persons invade it.

Ver. 26. *The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.*] For the Lord abhors all wicked designs, and mischievous contrivances: but the kind consultations and discourses of such as seek the welfare and comfort of others, are no less pleasing to him than they are pure.

Ver. 27. *He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house: but he that hateth gifts shall live.*] He that is so greedy of money, that he cares not how he gets it, instead of raising his family, confounds it: but he that hateth bribes, and all unlawful ways of gain, shall prosper, and continue it.

Ver. 28. *The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.*] A good man thinks it is soon enough to speak, when he is asked about a business, and deliberates within himself to speak nothing that is not to the purpose: but bad men are rash, and forward to utter their mind; and generally do more hurt than good.

Ver. 29. *The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.*] The Lord is far from giving any regard to the wicked, whose business it is to do evil, though they implore his favour: but sends good men help, when they pray unto him, as readily as they were wont to send relief to others.

Ver. 30. *The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat.*] It is a wonderful pleasure to behold all the beautiful works of God, which present themselves to our eyes: but nothing gives such intimate satisfaction, and makes a man so cheerful in well-doing, as to hear a fair report of his own honest actions; or to receive the good news of the well-doing of other virtuous men.

Ver. 31. *The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth*

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among the wise.] He that lends an attentive ear to wholesome reproof, and is obedient to it, is to be numbered among the wise, and shall at last be able to give good instructions unto others.

Ver. 32. *He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.*] And whosoever he be that refuseth, much more that contemneth, such instructions and reproofs, he sets his own soul at nought, and despiseth the means of safety: but he that diligently hearkens to it, knows what is good for himself; and keeps his soul from being lost for want of understanding.

Ver. 33. *The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.*] A brief institution of wisdom and virtue is this, to have an awful sense of God; with a devout affection to him, and fear to offend him: and as this is the best disposition for wisdom; so humility, and patient submission, in a low condition, is the best preparation for honour and preferment.

CHAP XVI.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] This chapter begins with a most necessary observation, which a good man ought always to have in his mind, (for which cause it is repeated, with little difference, twice more in this chapter, ver. 9. 33. and again chap. xix. 21.) the sense of which our translation seems to have missed. For it ascribes both the *preparation of the heart*, and *the answer of the tongue unto the Lord* (which is true in this regard, that without him we can do nothing); whereas the Hebrew words run plainly thus, *man hath the disposing of the heart;* he may, with God's leave and common assistance, intend, propound, resolve within himself, what he will say and do; but that he shall be able to utter things in that order he hath premeditated; or, if he be able, shall attain the end of his deliberation, and eloquent speech, is more than he can undertake; for *that is as the Lord pleaseth.* This seems to me to be better opened by Melancthon than any one I have read. Who truly observes, that such sayings as these do not take away the liberty of man's will or choice; but only shew, that even the best men sometimes err in their choice; and that the success doth not always answer. For we must diligently distinguish, saith he, between our election and the success: and remember, that we need a double help of God, for the making a happy choice: one of *judging right*, and the other afterward of *governing events.* For unless our judgment be ruled right, many errors happen; as we see in Josiah, Zedekiah, Demosthenes, Pompey, Cicero; who all erred "in eligendo bello," *in their resolves about war;* and direful events followed. And sometimes also when the mind doth not err in its judgment; yet God is not pleased to assist the action, for other causes. As in the war against the Benjamites, which miscarried a great while, because the Israelites trusted in their own strength. We must always therefore be sensible, that happy events do not depend merely on human forecast, diligence, and power, as Jeremiah speaks, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself;" *i. e.* he cannot have what success he will, but must be beholden to God for his happiness. This our weakness God would have us to acknowledge, and to fear and depend on him, as it follows here, ver. 3. "Commit thy work unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." To this use we ought to accommodate such sayings as these, not to a stoical opinion of necessity. Thus he.

[*b*] And he no less worthily glosses upon the common interpretation of ver. 4. the latter part of which hath exercised many pens to little purpose: when the sense is clear, though no expositor, that I have seen, hath hit upon it, *viz.* that *God makes some use of wicked men, as well as of all things else;* which they shall serve whether they will or not. For he *disposes* (so the word we translate *hath made* is to be understood; not of his *creating* things) all things correspondent to his own will and pleasure, which they all obey. So *lammaanthu* seems to be best translated, not *for himself*, but *according to his will.* However, I have included the other interpretation also in my Paraphrase; but applied *the day of evil* not to the punishment which he inflicts upon the wicked for their sins; but which he orders them to inflict upon others, when their iniquities are ripe for his vengeance. For it is the method of his providence to direct the ambition, wrath, hatred, revenge, &c. which he sees in some wicked men's hearts, to vent themselves there, where it will do service to him. Who wisely and justly makes some wicked men do execution upon others like themselves. This seems to me the most easy and natural sense of the words; which were remarkably fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman soldiers, whom our Saviour used to punish his crucifiers. Not that they undertook that war out of any design or desire to do our blessed Saviour right; but out of an ambition to enslave the world: ἐχρῆτο δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁμῶς ὁ Θεὸς ὡς δημίοις, δι αὐτῶν τοὺς ἠσεβηκότας κολάζων, *yet God made use of them for another design, as public executioners, by whom he punished the ungodly,* as Theodoret speaks upon Psal. lxxiv. 3.

[*c*] I must omit Melancthon's glosses upon this verse and the two next; that I may have room for his pertinent observation upon ver. 10. *A Divine sentence is in the lips of the king,* &c. "These words (says he) affirm the whole political order, *magistrates, laws, distinction of dominions, contracts, judgments, punishments,* to be things ordained by the wisdom of God among men. And since we know political order to be the work of God, we ought to love it, and study to defend it; and modestly for God's sake obey it; and give thanks to God who preserves it; and look upon those horrible furies of the devil and men, who disturb this order, to be displeasing to God: as this whole doctrine is explained, Rom. xiii. But *what is this Divine sentence* which is in the king's lips? It is *the laws* (says he); and *judgments according to the laws:* and besides, God hath armed kings with a power *to make laws of their own,* not repugnant to his laws; but built upon them, either by demonstrations, or probable reasons. God sometimes moves the mind of kings also, and gives them *singular motions* (as other excellent artificers have), because he will by that means save mankind, &c. Thus it was a singular motion in Solomon's reasoning about the mother of the child. And in the judgment of Gonzaga, in the last age,

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upon the Spanish governor of Milan under him: who having held a noble person captive a long time, would not deliver him to his wife (when she petitioned and offered a large sum of money for his redemption), unless he might lie with her; and after he had obtained his desire, then caused her husband to be killed, and delivered him dead to her. Which when Gonzaga heard, and had examined, he compelled him to marry this woman; and as soon as he had done that, he condemned him to be immediately beheaded, and gave her all his estate."

But we are not from such places as this to infer, that kings cannot give a wrong judgment: though this be as good a conclusion as from those words, *the priest's lips shall preserve knowledge*, to conclude the pope cannot err. Kings from this place of Solomon may as well pretend to infallibility, as priests from that place of Malachi. Nay, if we respect either the form of this precept, or the plenitude of God's promise for ability to perform it, we must confess, this place is more plain and peremptory for kings, than any can be brought for the high-priest's infallibility, in giving definitive sentence. And yet all the places (as a famous divine of our own speaks, Dr. Jackson, book iii. upon the Creed, chap. 12.) that can be brought either for the king's or priest's authority, rather shew what manner of men they should be, both in life and judgment, than assure them of any infallibility of judgment, if they be dissolute in life, and regard not the laws of God. This was a thing never dreamt of by any, till the notoriously infamous lives of popes discredited the titles of sanctity and infallibility (which, from the conceit of their predecessors' integrity, they had usurped), and enforced their flatterers to frame a distinction of sanctity in doctrine, separated from sanctity of life.

I thought it not amiss to say thus much upon this subject, because I find even Maldonate himself, in his notes upon this place, hath the confidence to conclude the pope must needs have this privilege, which is promised to kings; when it is apparent kings are not infallible; and consequently, by his own reasoning, popes cannot be so.

There are other notable sentences which would deserve a larger gloss than I have given in this Paraphrase; which I must pass by; because this preface is already prolonged to a great length.

[*d*] I shall only therefore mention two. One, ver. 21. where *wisdom* and *eloquence* are compared together. The former of which, no doubt, is of greatest value, as we see in those words of God to Moses, when he disabled himself for the service imposed upon him, for want of the other faculty: "There is Aaron (saith the text), he shall be thy speaker, and thou shalt be to him as God." Yet, in profit and popular esteem, wisdom gives place to eloquence; according to the Vulgar translation of this verse, *Sapiens corde appellatur prudens, sed dulcis eloquia majora reperiet;* signifying, says the Lord Bacon, (Adv. of Learning, book vi. chap. 3.) not obscurely, that "profoundness of wisdom may help men to fame and admiration: but it is eloquence which prevails in business and active life."

[*e*] The other is ver. 26. where I have put two senses together, according to the different acceptions of the Hebrew word *amal*, which signifies either to take pains one's self, or to molest others. But I can see no reason why Maldonate should favour the LXX. translation; who, against the stream of all other interpreters, apply these words to an ungodly man's *digging up evil* to himself, as if the meaning were, *he digs a pit for himself, and the words he speaks are the cause of his punishment, as if he were burnt:* unless it proceeded from his fondness for the Spanish inquisition, which he was desirous to introduce every where. The very best of them, it appears by him (who was one of the most learned and judicious interpreters in the Romish church), are most devoutly bent to our destruction: for he cannot forbear here to allege that inquisition as a proof of Solomon's words, "Id exemplo inquisitionis Hispanicæ perspicuum est," &c. *This is apparent by the example of the Spanish inquisition;* whereby he that speaks any thing rashly against the faith, is deservedly delivered to the fire; which *I wish were done every where.*—Thus, in the most literal sense, this Jesuit's lips are as a burning fire; in which he would have us not only singed, but devoured: in pursuance of this maxim of Solomon. Which others honestly interpret of those calumnies, discords, seditions, which evil men raise by their tongues, to the destruction of their neighbours. For so it follows, (ver. 28.) "A froward man soweth strife," &c.

Ver. 1. *THE preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.*] Men may deliberate, and contrive, and order, in their mind, what, and in what manner and method, they will speak: but whether they shall persuade and prevail or not for such an answer as they expect, nay, be able to deliver themselves with such elocution as they imagine, cannot be resolved by them, but depends upon the pleasure of the Lord. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirits.*] Such is the blindness of self-love, that men can find no fault in themselves; but imagine all that they contrive and do, to be free from blame; which, when the Lord examines, who searches into the very intentions of men's hearts, is found to be very defective, if not vicious.

Ver. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*] When thou undertakest any thing, implore the Divine blessing; and committing the success of it to God's providence, leave it to him to give what issue to it he pleases: which is the surest way to have thy honest designs accomplished.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*] The Lord disposeth all things throughout the world, to serve such ends, as he thinks fit to design; which they cannot refuse to comply withal: for if any men be so wicked as to oppose his will, he will not lose their service; but, when he brings a public calamity upon a country, employ them to be the executioners of his wrath. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*] There is no man so great, but if his mind grow lofty and arrogant, forgetting God, and insolently oppressing his neighbour, he is hateful beyond all expression unto the Lord; who will take vengeance on him, and pull him down, though he make never so strong confederacies to support himself; for if he avoid one punishment, another

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shall overtake him; nay, his wickedness shall pursue him from generation to generation, (xi. 21.)

Ver. 6. *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.*] The most effectual means to appease men's anger for private offences, or to divert the anger of God in public calamities, is to exercise mercy and loving-kindness, with justice and faithful performance of promises: especially when they proceed from an awful regard to God, and religious dread of his displeasure; which will make a man careful to decline every thing that is evil, and thereby escape the punishment that attends upon it.

Ver. 7. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*] The best way to have our enemies reconciled unto us, is for us first to be reconciled unto God: for such is the reverence men bear to virtue, and such is the love which the Lord hath to virtuous persons, that when all their designs and actions are such as he approves, he inclines even those that were their foes to become their friends.

Ver. 8. *Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.*] A small estate honestly gotten, and charitably enjoyed, is much to be preferred before vast incomes heaped up by oppression, and kept without hospitality.

Ver. 9. *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.*] The mind of man designs an end, and contrives what means to use, and reckons perhaps what success they will have: but the Lord determines what the event shall be, and orders his motions perhaps to such an issue, as never came into his thoughts.

Ver. 10. *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.*] God is present in a singular manner unto a pious king, inspiring his mind to divine sagaciously in dubious and obscure things; that his resolutions and decrees may be received like oracles; and all causes be decided by him so justly and exactly, that no man be wronged in the judgment which he passes. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 11. *A just weight and balance are the Lord's; all the weights of the bag are his work.*] And it is worthy of his care, that there be no corruption in private, no more than in public justice; for it also is of Divine institution: the great Lord of all requiring just and equal dealings in all our commerce one with another; which he hath ordained should be managed with scrupulous integrity, in the smallest, as well as in the greatest matters.

Ver. 12. *It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for the throne is established by righteousness.*] It is not enough to good kings that they do no injury; but they abominate, with the highest detestation, all oppression, cruelty, extortion, &c. not only in themselves, but in others; for they know that justice, mercy, and true religion, support their authority, and make their kingdoms durable.

Ver. 13. *Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.*] And calumniators, or flatterers, find no acceptance with such princes; but they delight in those that will not deceive them by false, unjust, and malicious informations; and make him their favourite, who deals sincerely, and tells them the truth, though it may seem ungrateful to them.

Ver. 14. *The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.*] The wrath of a king strikes such terror into him, with whom he is offended, as if the sentence of death were pronounced against him: but, as ill men and fools exasperate it more, so a virtuous and prudent courtier appeases his anger, and makes a reconciliation.

Ver. 15. *In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.*] And when a king will be pleased to look graciously upon a man, especially after he hath been incensed against him, it not only revives, but gives him the greatest joy; for from his favour he promises himself all manner of happiness; as a plentiful harvest follows the showers of rain, which, in the spring, refresh the corn.

Ver. 16. *How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver?*] But, after all is done, to get so much wisdom as to know the difference between good and evil, and to understand how to behave a man's self upon all occasions is, beyond all expression, better, and more to be chosen, than the greatest treasures of gold and silver, which either the favour of princes can give, or his own industry acquire.

Ver. 17. *The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.*] This is the constant aim and endeavour of upright men, the beaten path, as we may call it, in which they travel, to decline every thing that is evil: and he who makes this his care, looking well to all his actions, that he do nothing amiss, looks well to himself, and preserves his soul and body from destruction.

Ver. 18. *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*] Insolent behaviour is the forerunner of utter destruction: and when men lift up themselves in their own thoughts, and overlook all others with contempt, they are in the greatest danger to stumble; and not to see that, which will give them such a grievous downfall, as will break them all to shivers.

Ver. 19. *Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*] Therefore it is much better to submit to the meanest condition, nay, patiently to bear injuries, with afflicted, but meek and lowly persons, than to lift one's self to the prejudice of others, and by trampling upon them to partake with the proud in their rapine and spoil.

Ver. 20. *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.*] He that understands his business thoroughly, and manages it prudently and discreetly, is likely to have good success; but none so happy, none so sure of prospering in his design, as he that confides more in the Lord, than in his own skill and industry.

Ver. 21. *The wise in heart shall be called prudent; and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.*] He whose mind is well furnished with wisdom, cannot but win a great reputation, and be highly esteemed for his prudent counsels and resolutions: but if he have the powerful charms of eloquence also, to convey his mind delightfully unto others, it will add a greater value to his wisdom, and make it more diffusive and instructive unto the world. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 22. *Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.*] A clear understanding, and right judgment of things, like an inex-

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haustible spring, gives perpetual comfort and satisfaction to him in whom it is; and makes him very useful unto others: but the learning of fools is frivolous and vain; and therefore, if they undertake to instruct others, they only make them like themselves.

Ver. 23. *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.*] The mind of a wise man instructs him to speak judiciously and pertinently: and makes him not only communicate his thoughts to others, but with such weight of reason as increases their learning.

Ver. 24. *Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.*] Especially when he can deliver his mind in pleasing and delightful words, flowing from him with a natural eloquence, as honey drops from the comb: which ravish the affections, and touch a man's heart to the very quick; when he needs either comfort or cure for any inward disease wherewith he labours.

Ver. 25. *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the ends thereof are the ways of death.*] But there is never more need of caution, than when we hear a moving orator; therefore this instruction may be here necessary to be repeated, (xiv. 12.) examine every thing strictly and impartially; and be not led away merely by thy fancy and thy appetite: for they make many things seem innocent, which, in themselves, and in the issue, are deadly and destructive.

Ver. 26. *He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.*] It is a powerful motive to a man to take pains in an honest employment, that all his labour is for his own preservation; his mouth begging this favour of him, that he may not starve: and, on the contrary, he that spends his time in giving trouble and vexation unto others, will find it fall upon himself; for he cannot speak so much as an evil word, but it will return upon him, and fly back in his own face. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 27. *An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is as a burning fire.*] And it is not a little pains that an ungodly lawless man takes, to plot and devise mischief; wherein he labours, as if he was digging for a treasure; and one way is, to brand his neighbour with false reports and slanders, and thereby utterly destroy his reputation.

Ver. 28. *A froward man soweth strife; and a whisperer separateth chief friends.*] Others of them have such a perverseness in their spirit, that it is their business to disturb the world, and raise dissensions among those that would live in peace; by backbiting, detracting, and whispering false stories: making a breach even between princes and people, husband and wife, nay, the dearest friends and familiars, if they hearken to their tales.

Ver. 29. *A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.*] Another sort live by rapine and open violence; who are not content to do wrong themselves, but persuade others to enter into their society; and then lead them into the most pernicious courses.

Ver. 30. *He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.*] Which they do not fall into by chance; but with profound study contrive the ruin of others; and the sign being given, they furiously execute the mischief they have designed.

Ver. 31. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*] Old age is very venerable, when a man's past life hath been truly virtuous and useful: which is the best way also to prolong one's days; and bring one to that great honour which is due to those who have long done much good to mankind.

Ver. 32. *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*] He that can suppress the vehement motions of anger, deserves more praise than those mighty men who quell the enemies that oppose them: and he that hath power to govern all his own inclinations, affections, and passions, by reason, hath a nobler empire than he that subdues cities and countries by force of arms.

Ver. 33. *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*] Acknowledge the Divine providence in all things, even in those which seem most casual: for though men cast the lots into the lap of a garment, or into a hollow vessel, and thence draw them out again; yet it is the Lord who directs entirely in what order they shall come forth, and so determines the matter in doubt according to his pleasure.

CHAP. XVII.

ARGUMENT.

In the first verse of this chapter, the wise man observes how happy that family is which lives in peace and perfect agreement one with another; though they have but a mean estate. And next to this how happy a thing it is if there be but one wise and virtuous man in a family (suppose he be but a servant) when any dissensions and differences arise in it. For so the Lord Bacon (Advanc. of Learning, book viii. chap. 2. parab. 2.) expounds the [*a*] second verse; whose words I will set down, because, if they hit not the sense completely, yet they very pithily express a part of it, and carry in them a very important truth. "In all troubled and disagreeing families (saith he) there is commonly some servant or gentle friend, who, being powerful with both sides, may moderate and compose the differences that are among them. To whom, in that respect, the whole house, and the master himself, are much engaged and beholden. This servant, if he aim only at his own ends, cherishes and aggravates the divisions of the family: but if he be sincerely faithful and upright, certainly he deserveth much; so as to be reckoned as one of the brethren; or at least to receive a fiduciary administration of the inheritance."

[*b*] And after some other documents, there follows a notable *rule for the making peace*, and ending all differences; whether between particular persons in families, or between kingdoms: (ver. 9.) upon which the same great person thus glosses, (ib. parab. 27.) "There are two ways of proceeding to arbitrate differences and reconcile affections. The one begins with an act of oblivion of what is past; the other begins with a repetition of wrongs, subjoining apologies and excuses. Now some think this last to be the only way; insomuch, that I have heard a prudent person and great statesman lay down this maxim: He that treats of peace, without a recapitulation of the terms of difference, rather deceives men's minds with the sweet name of agreement, than composes them by equity and moderation of right. But Solomon, a wiser man than he, is of a contrary opinion; approving an act of oblivion, and forbidding repetition.

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For in repetition, or renewing the memory of the causes of difference, there are these inconveniences: not only that it is, as we say, *unguis in ulcere, raking in the ulcer*, which very much exasperates, but also endangers the breeding of new quarrels while they are debating the old (for the parties at difference will never accord about the terms of their falling out); and lastly, in the issue it brings the matter to apologies: whereas both the one and the other party would seem rather to have remitted the offence, than to have admitted excuses for it."

Melancthon thinks this and the three next verses, 10—12. to be sentences near of kin; all belonging to the right method in judging, which is comprehended in that saying of Christ's, *If thy brother sin against thee, tell him of it between thyself and him:* and interprets this ninth verse thus (taking *Aluph* for a prince, which we translate *chief friends):* He that orderly admonishes him that erreth, cures him, and makes no public disturbance; saves the man, and preserves public concord: but this order being neglected, thence arises out of brawlings, discords of princes, wars, and devastations.

[*c*] Now an evil man only seeks scoldings or contentions; (as it follows, ver. 11.) *i. e.* saith he, he doth not seek truth nor the good of the church, but troubles without end. Thus Cleon and Alcibiades in the state, scattered seeds of war at Athens: the cynics and academics contradicted every body among the philosophers: and lately, Valla, Cornelius Agrippa, Carolostadius, &c. had the like scolding natures. They seek not truth; but contradict things rightly spoken, or wantonly move unnecessary disputes, and will not yield when they are admonished, but with greater rage defend their errors. Of such Solomon here saith in the next verse, *it is better to meet a bear robbed of her whelps, than a fool in his folly.* An example of which we meet withal, when we meet with a bewitched papist, who defends the most manifest errors. Thus he.

But that which the Vulgar translates *semper jurgia quærit malus*, and we translate, *an evil man seeks only rebellion*, the most and the best interpreters take the other way; as the words lie more naturally in the Hebrew, *a man very rebellious seeks nothing but mischief:* which sense I have expressed in the Paraphrase, together with the other.

[*d*] The truth of the next verse (ver. 12.) is admirably opened by Bochartus, (lib. iii. de Animal. Sacris, cap. 9. par. i.) who observes four things concerning the *bear*, out of good authors. The first every one knows, that a *bear* is an exceeding fierce creature: the second is, that the *female* is more fierce than the *male:* the third, that she is more fierce than ordinary, when she hath whelps: and lastly, that when she is robbed of them she is fiercest of all, *immanem in modum, even unto rage and madness.* Which the Scripture takes notice of in two other places besides this, 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Hosea xii. 8. where St. Jerome observes that the writers of natural history say, among all wild beasts, none more fierce and cruel than the *bear*, in two cases especially, when she wants food, and when she is robbed of her whelps. The reason of this last is there given by Kimchi; which well enough agrees with the comparison which the wise man here makes: *for a bear cannot be more in love with her whelps, than a fool is with his absurd opinions and resolutions:* and as a *bear* falls upon the next person she meets withal, taking him for the robber; so doth a fool upon every one that stands in his way, though he be never so much obliged to him. He spares none in the heat of his passions, but furiously abuseth them, &c.

[*e*] Unto what is expressed in the Paraphrase upon ver. 17. concerning *a brother being born for adversity* (which I have referred, as the best interpreters do, unto a *friend),* this may be added, as the plainest translation of the Hebrew words: *A true friend* (spoken of before) *is born* (that is, *becomes) a brother in adversity.* He was a friend before; this makes him a brother; and so he is to be esteemed.

[*f*] There is a phrase in the nineteenth verse, *exalteth his gate*, which is variously taken by interpreters. I have expounded it literally; not for the *mouth*, but for the *gate of a house* or other place; and have put two senses together.

[*g*] Various glosses also have been made upon the beginning of ver. 22. *a merry heart doth good like a medicine:* where, because the particle *like* is wanting in the Hebrew, other constructions have been made of the words; some, for instance, having taken them thus; *a merry heart makes a medicine work better, or do more good.* But he that can consult Bochartus (in his second book of Sacred Animals, chap. 16. par. ii.) may find so many examples of the effect of that which they call כף רמיון *caph similitudinis;* that he will not think it unreasonable to supply it (as our translators have done) in this place of the Proverbs.

In the twenty-fourth verse I have put two senses, in which the words may be taken, into one. And that none may wonder at the repetition of the [*h*] same thing in the twenty-fifth verse, which was said just before in the twenty-first, I shall here observe, that there is no doubt but Solomon, having frequent occasions to speak of the same matter, varied the words sometimes, but not the sense; and so the collectors of his sayings put down both. And he might speak the oftener of this matter, having an example before his eyes of the great weakness of his own son: who, it is not unlikely, was a perpetual grief to him. There is also something observable in this verse, which was not in the other; *viz.* that the untowardness of children have many times different effects upon the parents: provoking the fathers to anger and exasperation; and the mothers to grief and sorrow, to which their tenderness more inclines them than to the other passion.

There are several ways also of expounding the latter end of the next verse, (ver. 26.) I have expressed the sense of our translation; and had respect, in the next verse to that, (ver. 27.) to both readings of the word which we render *excellent.*

Ver. 1. *BETTER is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.*] There is more satisfaction in a bit of dry bread (without butter or oil, &c.) in the open field, and love and concord therewith; than in a house full of the best cheer in the world, attended with brawling, contention, and strife.

Ver. 2. *A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance*

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among the brethren.] Probity and prudence are so much better than mere riches and noble birth, that a wise and faithful servant sometimes arrives at the honour of being appointed the governor of a son, whose folly and wickedness make him a discredit to his family: nay, he is left not only executor of the father's will, or trustee for the children; but his merits, perhaps, are rewarded with a portion of the estate, which is to be distributed among them. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 3. *The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts.*] The art of man hath found out means to prove whether gold and silver be pure or not; but none can search into the secret thoughts, designs, and inclinations of men's souls, but the Lord: who (as those metals are tried by fire) many times proves and discovers what they are by sharp afflictions and troubles.

Ver. 4. *A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*] A man that designs evil unto others, hearkens greedily to him that will tell false and mischievous stories; and there never wants such a man, of the very same mind with himself; for he who gives his mind to lying and falsehood, listens to him that speaks the most pestilent things.

Ver. 5. *Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.*] He that derides a man because he is poor, forgets God, who can bring him down to as low a condition: nay, affronts his majesty, who hath promised to take a peculiar care of such friendless persons: nor is he much better, who rejoiceth at the calamity of others, which will bring unavoidable punishments upon himself.

Ver. 6. *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.*] The honour and comfort of parents lie in a numerous progeny, which doth not degenerate from their ancestors' virtue: and that which makes children illustrious, is their being descended from worthy parents; whose wisdom and virtue reflect an honour upon their posterity.

Ver. 7. *Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince.*] It doth not become a fool to discourse of grave and weighty matters; which as they are above him, so are not regarded out of his mouth, though he should speak excellent things; but it is much less seemly for a prince to lie and deceive; which as it is below him who represents the God of truth, so it makes him despicable, and destroys his authority, when his subjects cannot rely upon his word.

Ver. 8. *A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth it prospereth.*] A gift is so tempting, that it can no more be refused, than a lovely jewel by him to whom it is presented; and such is its power, it commonly prevails over all men, dispatches all business, carries all causes; and, in a word, effects whatsoever a man desires.

Ver. 9. *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love: but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.*] He that passes by and buries in oblivion a transgression that hath been committed against him, takes the best course to preserve friendship, and to make himself universally beloved; but he who rakes up that fault again, and objects it afresh when it was forgotten, breaks the strictest bands of amity, and makes an irreconcilable separation. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 10. *A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.*] One reproof penetrates deeper into the mind of an ingenuous man, and works a greater alteration there, than a hundred stripes will do for the amendment of an obstinate fool.

Ver. 11. *An evil man seeketh only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.*] Who seeking nothing but to have his own will, and being so refractory, that he hath shaken off all reverence to God, or to his governors, is wholly bent upon mischief, and cannot be reclaimed; it remains therefore only, that a severe execution be done upon him, to cut him off in his folly, without mercy. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 12. *Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.*] There is less danger in meeting a bear in the height of her rage, than a furious fool in the pursuit of his unruly passions and desires: for it is possible to defend a man's self against the one; but there is no way to hinder the brutish motions of the other. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 13. *Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.*] It is so unnatural for a man to return evil to him from whom he hath received nothing but good, that the punishment of his ingratitude shall not rest in his own person, but descend upon his posterity to all generations.

Ver. 14. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.*] When men begin a quarrel or a difference, they know not where it will end: for the very first breach is like cutting the banks of a river, which presently overflows the neighbouring grounds, but cannot easily be reduced into its bounds again. It is best therefore to make peace immediately, before both parties be involved in such troubles, as, like a deluge of water, lay all desolate.

Ver. 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.*] It is hard to say, which is most detestable to the Lord, he that pleads for a wicked man, and, more than that, acquits him; or he that pleads against the righteous, nay, plainly condemns him. Certain it is, they are both most highly obnoxious to his displeasure, who is the fountain of justice; and as he would have it exactly administered, so he hates those who endeavour to confound the nature of good and evil among men.

Ver. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*] What good doth a great estate in the possession of a fool? Can he therewith purchase wisdom how to use it? alas! he wants understanding to desire it, and to procure good instructors, in which his riches (if his mind were good) might be serviceable to him.

Ver. 17. *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*] Time makes proof of a friend; who, if he be sincere, loves not merely for a fit, nor alters with the change of one's condition; but continues steadfast in adversity, as well as in prosperity: nay, in straits and distresses, shews himself more like a brother than a friend. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 18. *A man void of understanding striketh hands,*

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and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.] He is very inconsiderate, whose kindness makes him forward to pass his word for the payment of another man's debts, (vi. 1. xi. 15.) and especially to enter into bonds in the presence of his neighbour for whom he engages: which may make him more careless about the payment than he would have been, if unknown to him he had been security for him.

Ver. 19. *He loveth transgression that loveth strife; and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.*] He vainly pretends to the love of piety, who accustoms himself to brawling and contention: which as necessarily draw along with them abundance of sins, as lifting up a man's self above his estate, in raising sumptuous buildings, brings him to ruin: or as breach of the public peace opens wide the flood-gates to all iniquity. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 20. *He that hath a froward heart findeth no good; and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.*] A man of wicked designs, which he resolves to accomplish by any sort of means, shall find himself deceived in his expectation: and he who employs his tongue to deceit and fraud, pretending fair to men before their face, but slandering them behind their back, shall, by that very means, bring mischief upon himself.

Ver. 21. *He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy.*] Great is the care which ought to be taken in the contract of marriage, and in the education of children: for if a son prove vicious and lewd, it will be such an inexpressible grief to his father, that he will take no comfort at all in any things he enjoys, (ver. 25.)

Ver. 22. *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*] And consequently it will shorten his days: for as nothing conduces more to health than a cheerful spirit, which serves instead of physic; so nothing destroys it more than sadness and grief, which consume the vital juices, and dry up the body to skin and bone. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 23. *A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.*] No man would willingly be known to be so wicked as to be bribed to do injustice: but there are too many that will suffer themselves to be secretly corrupted by presents, to give counsel or judgment contrary to the course of law and equity.

Ver. 24. *Wisdom is before him that hath understanding: but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.*] As a wise man's understanding appears in his very countenance; and a fool is known by his garish and wondering eyes: so the one hath his wisdom always present and ready at hand to guide and govern him; when the other knows not what to follow, but his thoughts are roving up and down to no purpose, though he ramble to the very ends of the earth.

Ver. 25. *A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.*] A foolish dissolute son, who regards not the counsel of his parents, wasting their estate, and disgracing their family, is such a vexation to his father, that he provokes his indignation; and such a grief to his mother, that it makes her life bitter and irksome to her. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 26. *Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.*] There may be specious pretences for it; but it is against all honesty and piety to punish innocent persons together with delinquents: especially to scourge judges and governors, for doing equal justice upon all offenders.

Ver. 27. *He that hath knowledge spareth his words; and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.*] The more any man knows, the less he is apt to talk: for his wisdom gives him such an excellent composure of spirit, that it represses his heat, his forwardness, and haste; and makes him coolly deliberate what, and when, it is fit to speak.

Ver. 28. *Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.*] Such a virtue it is to be silent, that he who understands nothing is deemed wise, as long as he holds his peace; and he whose mind hath such power over his mouth as to keep it shut, that nothing may suddenly and impetuously go out, is wise indeed.

CHAP. XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] There is so much difficulty in the two first verses, which hath produced so many various interpretations, that I scarce know which to follow. Some take that word which we translate *separateth himself,* in a good sense; others in a bad: I have chosen the latter, because it seems most agreeable to the rest of the words. But the Chaldee interpreter gives a quite different sense, both of that word, and of some other in these verses: and De Dieu hath shewn there is such reason for it, that I think I am obliged here to take notice of it, and to paraphrase upon it.

By *niphrad,* which we render *separateth himself,* he understands *a man divided,* uncertain in his own mind, who can stick to nothing; but wanders about in his own thoughts. And the last word in the first verse, *jithgalla,* which we translate *intermeddleth,* he translates *is left desolate.* And in the next verse, taking *behith galloth* for *wandering up and down,* not for *discovering,* or *revealing,* as we do, the paraphrase will run thus:—

Ver. 1. An inconstant man desires many things, and seeks satisfaction: but whatsoever he seeks, he never meets with it, but is defeated and disappointed in all his designs.

Ver. 2. And this is a certain character of a fool, that he never fixes in any thing; but chooses rather to gad up and down, and rove from one inquiry to another, than give his mind to true wisdom and prudence, in which he hath no pleasure.

The Lord Bacon aims at this, I suppose, when he briefly expresses the sense of Solomon thus; "Pro desiderio quærit cerebrosus, omnibus immiscet se;" *A hare-brained man seeks to satisfy his fancy, and intermixeth himself with all things.* According to that of Seneca, "Vita sine proposito, languida est et vaga;" *A life that proposeth no end to pursue, is faint, sickly, and vagrant.*

If we take the word *niphrad* in a good sense, then the paraphrase must run thus:—

Ver. 1. He that lives retired, and sequesters himself from all company and business, out of a true affection to wis-

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dom, endeavours to have a sound knowledge and understanding of things.

Ver. 2. But a vain man addicts himself to his studies, for no other end, but only to vapour with a show of wisdom, which he doth not love.

[b] As for the Vulgar translation, it is so remote from the Hebrew, that I shall only observe a handsome application which the Lord Bacon hath made of the second verse, to a quite different purpose from all interpreters that I am acquainted with. The words there run thus: "Non recipit stultus verba prudentum, nisi ea dixeris quæ versantur in corde ejus." Which is commonly understood of *accommodating one's self to the humour of a fool*, who otherwise will not regard what is said to him: but that great man applies *to the way of dealing with men of corrupt minds and depraved judgments.* "Who presuppose that honesty grows out of weakness of wit, and want of experience; or only out of a silly belief given to preachers and schoolmasters, to books and popular opinions. And, therefore, unless you can make them plainly perceive that you know what is in their very heart, when you exhort and admonish them; and are as well acquainted with their depraved principles and crooked rules, and have as fully discovered and deeply sounded them as themselves, they will despise all manner of virtue and the most excellent counsels; according to that admirable oracle of Solomon, *A fool will not receive the words of the wise, unless thou speakest the very things that are in his heart;* i. e. an honest man can do no good upon the wicked, unless he know all the coverts and depths of wickedness. In which Machiavel himself hath done some service; by discovering plainly *what men used to do*, not *what they ought to do.*" (Advanc. of Learning, book vii. chap. 2.)

[c] The next verse may have a connexion with these two, and intend to describe the worst of wicked men, who seek for glory by being so bold as to scorn religion, and all the teachers of it. Such men are the greatest of Solomon's fools: by whom an excellent person (whom the Hebrews call *isch*, in opposition to *Adam*) should not be discouraged from pouring out good instructions, as he shews in the following words, (ver. 4.)

[d] Then, after a caution to judges (ver. 5.) to search into the merits of a cause, and not merely to look to the quality of the person that appears before them; he observes in several verses the mischief done by the tongue, ver. 6—8. In the last of which the word *mithlahamim*, being of uncertain signification (because it is but once more used, and in this book, to the same purpose), I have taken in two or three of the senses of which it is capable: as he that pleases to examine will be satisfied.

[e] Rabbi Levi observes, that in the tenth verse there begins another sort of precepts of a different kind from those that have been hitherto delivered from the beginning of the tenth chapter to this place. All which have been in a manner concerning the danger of such vices, as *sloth, hatred, anger, deceit, brawling, strife, impiety,* and other parts of that folly, against which he hath given many general cautions. But now he proceeds, as that Jewish doctor thinks, to an argument of another nature, directing men in the management of affairs of state, or in domestic business, &c. Which is true in part, but not an exact observation: for there are precepts of the former kind interspersed in the following chapters, as any one may see that will read them: and so there are several political maxims, and others belonging to different matters, in the chapters foregoing. Even that observation which here immediately follows, (ver. 11.) concerning a rich man's confidence in his wealth, rather than in the Divine providence and protection, was delivered in part before, (x. 13.) And the very next concerning pride and humility (ver. 12.) in xv. 33. xvi. 18. And that also (ver. 16.) about gifts was touched in xvii. 8.

[f] The thirteenth verse is referred by some to judges, who were anciently called *cognitores*. And in good authors *cognoscere* is as much as to do the office of a judge; who ought to take the greatest care to know the truth, before he gives a sentence. For if it be a shame to a private person, in ordinary discourse, to answer a matter before he heareth it, much more will it be to a magistrate, if, in matters of justice and judgment, he come to a resolution, before he hath taken full cognizance of them.

[g] Some would connect the seventeenth verse with the foregoing, but I have taken it separately. And there being several ways of interpreting it, either *politically*, with relation to causes brought before a judge; or *spiritually*, with relation to what is transacted in a man's own soul; I have followed our translation, which seems to me nearest to the Hebrew. In which a *just man* is not the person of whom Solomon speaks; but the mark of the nominative case (as grammarians call it) is set before the word *first*. So that it hath the same meaning with our vulgar saying; *One tale is good, till another be told:* though I think there is more in it; and the Lord Bacon hath made this excellent discourse upon it; which I have not neglected in my Paraphrase:

"The first information, (says he, Adv. of Learning, book viii. chap. 2. parab. 17.) in any cause, if it a little fix itself in the mind of the judge, takes deep root, and wholly seasons and prepossesses it; so as it can hardly be taken out, unless some manifest falsehood be found in the matter of the information; or some cunning dealing, in exhibiting, and laying open the same. For a bare and simple defence, though it be just and more weighty, can hardly compensate the prejudice of the first information, nor is of force in itself to reduce the scales of justice, once swayed down, to an equal balance. Wherefore it is the safest course for a judge, that nothing touching the proofs and merit of the cause be intimated beforehand, until both parties be heard together: and it is best for the defendant, if he perceive the judge to be pre-occupated, to labour principally in this (so far as the quality of the cause will admit) to discover some cunning shifts, and fraudulent dealing, practised by the adverse party, to the abuse of the judge."

They that expound this verse (as the ancients generally do) concerning private judgment, within a man's own soul, follow the LXX. and the Vulgar Latin: and commonly make this the meaning:—A good man, before he minds another man's faults, will first narrowly look to his own; and call himself to an account, before he inquire after the miscarriages. This is an excellent sense (if the words would bear it), which some of the Lutherans fol-

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low; even Melancthon himself, who thus translates it, "Justus initio est accusator sui, postea inquirit in alium:" and runs into a long discourse concerning self-love, and men's blindness to their own faults, and quick-sightedness in spying other men's; citing the known sayings of Catullus, Horace, and Persius, to this purpose. But though he takes the *just man* here to be opposed to the *hypocrite* our Saviour speaks of, who minds the mote in his brother's eye, and neglects the beam in his own, yet he acknowledges that the Greek word in the LXX. belongs to the law, and the civil courts, *viz.* πρωτολογία, which is the allegations of the accuser, before the other party is heard: and hath this remark out of Demosthenes: "It is hard to pull out of men's minds the opinion they have first conceived."

Which Verres, among the Romans, understood so well, that it was his common trick *to accuse those whom he had injured:* for men are apt to favour the plaintiff, supposing he cannot have the impudence to complain without a cause.

Nay, there are those in the Roman church that apply the Vulgar translation this way; to this sense:—"A just man is so prudent (as well as honest) as to relate all that concerns his cause sincerely, without concealing any thing; even accusing himself if he be guilty: whereby he procures greater favour, and prevents what his adversary would have said; who, be sure, would have laid it open to his disgrace, if he had craftily omitted any thing," &c.

But I will not trouble the reader with any other of their interpretations; which are devised merely to make good that translation. The truth of ours may be farther justified from the next, (ver. 18.) which belongs to the matter of civil controversies: which, if the judges could not determine, were referred to God's decision by lots.

[*h*] But I have said enough, if not too much, of this: and therefore shall only observe a few reflections which Melancthon makes upon the twenty-second verse. "Where he notes first, how acceptable the *state of marriage* is to almighty God, as well as unto us. And next, what care he takes of pious persons in that state; for so he understands those words, as they run in the Vulg. Lat. *Hauriet voluptatem a Deo.* As if he should say, *There are great dangers in human life, and many common miseries; but God will be the keeper of such married persons, as, in happy concord and agreement, invoke his protection.* Such were Zachary and Elizabeth, and other pious persons; whom God wonderfully preserved, when the armies of wicked men ravaged all Judea. When Lamyrus slew thirty-thousand Jews, and caused the captives to eat the carcasses of their brethren; then he protected Zachary and Elizabeth, and the blessed Virgin and her parents; as he saved the three children in the fiery furnace. By which examples we may conceive, what it is to *draw pleasure from the Lord.*

"Those words also shew, what comfort and delight there are in an agreeable marriage; and therefore we ought to flee fornication, and keep in mind those severe threatenings, *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,* &c. and the punishment God inflicted upon the inhabitants of Canaan for their confused lusts. "Nec est dubium, magnam partem calamitatum," &c. *Nor is there any doubt that a great part of the calamities among all mankind are the punishments of filthy lusts.* Let us therefore be more ardent in begging chastity of God; for the more he is displeased with impurity, the more carefully we ought to preserve chastity: and let us observe that rule, *To shun sins, is to shun the occasions of sins.*"

Ver. 1. *THROUGH desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.*] He that affects singularity inquires into all manner of things, according as his vain-glorious humour leads him: which makes him also bend himself, with all the wit he hath, to overthrow the solid reasons of wiser men. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.*] For a fool will never take any pleasure in true understanding; but all the design of his studies is, to make a vain ostentation of wisdom unto others: this is his chiefest pleasure, to hear himself discourse; that is, discover the folly that is in his heart. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.*] Into whatsoever company or society (suppose into the schools of wisdom) a profane person comes, he brings along with him contempt of God, and religion, and good men: and (as one wickedness grows out of another) that contempt improves into affronts, and reproachful language of them. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.*] A man of great understanding is never exhausted, nor wants matter of useful instruction: his mind being like a fountain, out of which wise thoughts spring perpetually; and flow in abundance, with a torrent of eloquence, for the common good and benefit.

Ver. 5. *It is not good to accept the person of the wicked to overthrow the righteous in judgment.*] Apologies may be made for it, but it can never be made consistent with honesty and goodness, to have respect to the person, not to the cause, which is brought before one in judgment: for by that means the wicked is favoured, because he is rich, or because he is a friend, &c. and the just man loses his right and is oppressed, because he is poor, or none of the judge's acquaintance.

Ver. 6. *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.*] If a fool find others scolding or contending, he will thrust himself into the quarrel; but is so unskilful, that instead of making them friends, he increases the difference, till from words they come to blows; in which he escapes not without some share of them to himself.

Ver. 7. *A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.*] For, in all other cases, a fool uses his tongue so imprudently, that he ruins himself by his own discourse: and if he go about to defend what he saith, he is but the more entangled, to the certain hazard of his life.

Ver. 8. *The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*] A whisperer of false stories makes a great show of harmlessness, if not of love and kindness, when he backbites others; nay, seems perhaps to do it very unwillingly, with great grief of heart, and not without excuses for the persons from whom he detracts: but his words give them the most deadly

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wound; and sink deep into the mind of those that hear them. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 9. *He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*] There is so little difference between a slothful man and a prodigal, that they may be called brethren: for he that looks not after his business, must needs come to poverty, as well as he that is a spendthrift.

Ver. 10. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*] The almighty power and goodness of the great Lord of the world, are the securest defence in all manner of dangers: unto which a virtuous man may have the confidence cheerfully to resort, and hope to find protection; nay, to be there as safe as if he was in an impregnable fortress. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 11. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit.*] The worldly-minded man indeed thinks otherwise, and places his security in heaps of wealth, which he fancies hath a power to do any thing, and is able to defend him (like a high bulwark, which none can scale) from all assaults: but, alas! this is only his own vain opinion; he is safe merely in imagination.

Ver. 12. *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; and before honour is humility.*] When a man's spirit grows lofty by prosperity, forgetting God, and despising his brethren, it is a certain forerunner of his utter destruction: as, on the other side, humility, meekness, and patience, in a low condition, are the best preparation for honour and preferment.

Ver. 13. *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*] He that is so forward as to answer to a business before he hath heard the state of it (that is, before he understands it), thinks, perhaps, to shew the quickness of his apprehension: but, by his impertinent discourse, declares his egregious folly, and makes himself ridiculous. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 14. *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity: but a wounded spirit who can bear?*] There is a vast difference between outward and inward evils; for a manly spirit will support us under bodily sicknesses and outward afflictions: but if the mind itself have lost its courage, and become abject, cast down and oppressed with grief and sadness; it is not in the power of man to raise and lift it up.

Ver. 15. *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.*] He (therefore) that hath so much understanding, as to consider what is good for himself, will take the greatest care to possess his mind with the true knowledge of God, and of his duty to him; and be so wise as to listen to those that can give him right information; for it is this alone that can preserve the mind from being dejected and broken.

Ver. 16. *A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.*] There is no man so mean but he may make his way, whithersoever he desires, by gifts and presents: which will produce his enlargement, if he be in prison; and, more than that, bring him into favour with great men; nay, purchase him the honour to wait upon princes.

Ver. 17. *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.*] A man may seem to have a good cause, who hath got the start of his neighbour, till he come also to examine his information, and open the whole matter before the judge: nay, more than this, he hath a great advantage who first possesses the judge's mind with the justice of his cause; for it will not be easy for his adversary to find out his tricks and to confute him, without a diligent search and curious inquiry into what he hath alleged. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 18. *The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.*] But in some cases it is very hard to make an end of suits, where the reasons are strong on both sides, or the parties contending both very powerful to maintain their pretensions: and then the casting of lots is an equal way to determine the controversy, and put each of them in quiet possession of that which falls to his share.

Ver. 19. *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*] But there are no contentions so sharp and obstinate as those among brethren: who grow so refractory when they have transgressed against each other, that it is easier to take a strong city, or to break the bars of a castle, than it is to compose their differences, and remove all the obstructions that lie in the way to their hearty reconciliation.

Ver. 20. *A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.*] The tongue is so hard to govern, and so much depends upon it, that (it cannot be too oft repeated, xii. 2. 14.) we ought to take as great care about the words we speak, as we do about the fruit of our trees, or the increase of the earth, which we are to eat; for, according as they are wholesome and good, or unsavoury and bad, so will the pleasure or the pain be, wherewith we shall be filled.

Ver. 21. *Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*] The good or the harm that the tongue can do, both to a man's self and unto others, is more than can be expressed; for many have cut their own throats by incautious words, or brought themselves off from danger by prudent answers: in like manner, by false accusations, it destroys other men, or saves them by testifying the truth; and this may be laid down for a general rule, that they who love to talk much shall suffer by it.

Ver. 22. *Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.*] He who hath married a wife that is truly a helpmeet for him, hath met with a most excellent blessing; and ought thankfully to acknowledge the singular favour of God, in guiding his mind to make so happy a choice. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 23. *The poor useth entreaties: but the rich answereth roughly.*] Boldness doth not become a beggar, but modest entreaties and doleful supplications, which is the proper language of the poor and miserable: and if they meet with a stern or harsh answer from the rich, it is no wonder; and they must still humbly deprecate their displeasure.

Ver. 24. *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*] A friendly person is prone to do all neighbourly offices, which is the very end of friendship, and the way to preserve it: and such a friend is sometimes found, who loves so heartily, that he sticks closer to his friend in any strait, and assists him more faithfully, than a brother.

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CHAP. XIX.

ARGUMENT.

[a] This chapter begins with a comparison between the rich and the poor; whom, in another regard, he had compared together in the last verse but one of the foregoing chapter. The sense is plain enough; and it is, *μία τῶν παροιμιῶν σοφῶς ἔχουσα, one of those proverbs which contains much wisdom in it,* as Greg. Nazianzen speaks, (Orat. xxvi. p. 458, 459.) who applies it unto Christians of mean understanding, and simple speech; that understand not *λόγων στροφὰς*; neither the instances of Pyrrho, nor the syllogisms of Chrysippus; nor the depraved cunning of Aristotle's arts, nor the witchery of Plato's eloquence; which, like the Egyptian plagues, had infested the church. There is no need (says he) of any of these: but a poor man that *walks in his simplicity, ὁ πένης ἐν λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει,* as he paraphraseth it *(poor in discourse, and reasoning, and knowledge),* and relies upon plain simple words, is much better (and will in this way be saved, as in a small cogboat) than a fool (for he is no better) that knows how to wind and turn every way in his discourse; and most unlearnedly trusts to his demonstrations, &c. But this must be acknowledged not to be the literal sense of the words, but only an accommodation of them to his purpose; which was to represent how commendable simplicity is in religion and inquiries of faith, as well as in all things else. Not that a man should content himself to be ignorant, but only that he should not be too curious and subtle in his disquisitions.

[b] For Solomon, in the next verse, observes two great springs of all our miscarriages; want of understanding, and want of deliberation. To make too much haste in a business is the way not to speed (according to the known proverb); and to run blindly upon any thing is no less prejudicial to us in our undertakings. That is the meaning of the first word, which we translate *also:* both he that affects things without knowledge, and he that pursues what he understands without deliberation, run into many mistakes, and commit many sins. So some render the word *nephes (soul), the desire of the soul,* the appetite, which must be always governed by prudence; or else it will run a man upon rocks, and precipitate him into ruin. For which miscarriage, he shews in the next verse, (ver. 3.) he must blame none but himself, and never in the least reflect upon God, as if he were negligent of us, or hard to us: which men are prone to think when they have foolishly undone themselves.

[c] Then follows an observation which he had made before, (xiv. 20.) but here repeats, in different words, over and over again, (ver. 4. 6, 7.) For it is a lamentable thing to see how little true friendship there is in the world; most men altering and changing together with the fortune (as we call it) of those whom they pretend to love. If they be rich, they are courted by every body; but poverty shews how insincerely. The books of all ancient authors are full of such sentences; which I shall not so much as mention. [d] But note that in the midst of these, he inserts (ver. 5.) an observation (which he had formerly made) of a greater wickedness in human nature; which moves them either publicly to accuse others falsely, or secretly to backbite them; neither of which shall escape unpunished. For "there is no word so secret that shall go for nought, and the mouth that belieth slayeth the soul;" as the Wisdom of Solomon excellently speaks, (i. 11.) This is repeated also again in this very chapter, (ver. 9.) with the alteration only of one word. The reason of which is, that Solomon (as I have noted before), using often the same axioms, sometimes varied the phrase, though not the sense: and the collectors of his sayings thought good to set down his different forms of speech, for the same thing. In both verses the LXX. plainly understand him to speak of such lies as are pernicious and hurtful to others: and in the latter of them, they take the destruction which the wise man threatens unto such liars, to arise from their own wicked words. And so I have expressed it in my Paraphrase. There are those who think that this sentence is repeated in the ninth verse, as an admonition to the rich men spoken of in the verses foregoing: who break their promises with those that depend upon them; and give good words when there is no need of them: but will do no good when men call for their assistance. These shall suffer for their falseness. But this seems to be strained, and not agreeable to the meaning of the Hebrew text.

[e] That which follows (ver. 10.) is a notable admonition of the confused and disordered state of things here in this present world; wherein we too often see men, void of wit or goodness, wallowing in pleasure; that is, abounding in all things that can gratify their senses, which they please most absurdly: and mean men getting into power, and lording it over their betters, &c. These things are very unseemly, saith Solomon; and the latter of these more unseemly than the former: but so it will be unless men become wise and good; for most are made worse by prosperity, which they know not how to use. Therefore it is a true rule of the son of Sirach, (Ecclus. xxxiii. 24.) "Fodder, a wand, and burdens for an ass: and bread, correction, and work for a slave." Every one is best in the condition that is proper for him; and therefore a slave should be kept under, and a brutish sot be restrained from taking all his pleasure. For no man is fit to govern another that cannot govern himself, as the next verse intimates: and the more power any man hath, the harder it is for him to command his passions: which may be suggested in the twelfth [f] verse; for the *young lion,* to whom a king is compared, as he is the strongest, so is the fiercest of all other.

From hence the wise man passes to some domestic observations (ver. 13—15. 18, 19.) Upon which if I should make any remarks, it would extend this preface beyond its just bounds. The skilful reader will see where I have put two senses together: which I could not do in the twenty-third verse; and therefore shall here give a short account of it.

[g] All interpreters, except one, understand it as our translation hath rendered it; by supplying a word before *abideth satisfied.* Only Lud. de Dieu thinks the parts of this verse are opposite; as the rest used to be: and by that word which we translate *satisfied* (which signifies *full* in the Hebrew language), understands proud and haughty people (as they who are rich are too prone

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to be), who are here opposed to him that fears God; as they are in Luke i. 50, 51. 53. And the paraphrase will run thus: He that is possessed with such a religious sense of God, that he fears to offend him, is a most happy man: but he that is swollen with pride and forgets God, when worldly goods flow in upon him, shall lie down at last in sorrow, and never want something or other to afflict him. And something of this sense the LXX. seem to have had in their mind; who make the members of this verse opposite, as he doth; understanding by שבע *full*, he that hath no fear of God. For so their translation runs; *The fear of the Lord is to a man's life,* ὁ δὲ ἄφοβος, &c. *but he that is without fear* (*viz.* of God) *shall abide in places where there is no knowledge to govern him; i. e.* run blindly into all manner of mischief.

[*h*] The next verse is a most elegant, but hyperbolical, description of a man that hath given up himself to sloth: who refuses to do things as *easy* as to pull his hand out of his bosom; and as *necessary* as to eat and drink. This being the plain sense, I have not varied from the common translation of the word *zallachath;* which every where signifies a *pot,* or *dish,* or something like it; and can only by a metaphor be applied to the bosom, or arm-holes. But we must either so understand it, or else take the first word, *taman, hide,* in a very improper sense: for there can be no cause for hiding the hand in a pot. Therefore we must either translate it as we do, or else understand by *hide,* putting or thrusting the hand into the pot or dish; and thus translate the whole verse: *A sluggard puts his hand into the dish; but will not so much as move it from thence unto his mouth.*

[*i*] The next verse, as Melancthon well notes, is an observation concerning the way of amending the world. Some are so bad, they must be handled with great sharpness: especially such profane men, as with an epicurean contempt deride admonitions, and grow thereby more furious. But there are those who grow better, even by the example of severity against notorious offenders: as the Gibeonites came and sought peace, when they saw their neighbours destroyed; and the punishment of Sisamnes made Otanes more cautious, when he was placed in the seat covered with his predecessor's skin; as Herodotus relates in his Terpsichore. But then there are a third sort, who need not so much; but, being admonished, are obedient to those that tell them of their faults. To such a reproof, at the most, is sufficient.

[*k*] In the two next verses I have had respect to both constructions, of which they are capable. But, in ver. 28. I have omitted the sense which some great Hebricians give of the words; as if an *ungodly witness* sought only by false colours to deceive the judge, and thereby pervert judgment. For a witness of Belial seems to me rather to signify such an impudent varlet as sticks not boldly to testify to the grossest lies.

Ver. 1. *BETTER is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.*] A poor man who acts sincerely, and hath no guile in his mouth, is far happier, and more to be commended, than he that gathers great riches by fraud and circumvention: which he takes to be cunning, but will prove folly in the end. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet, sinneth.*] Ignorance and inconsideration are equally mischievous; for a mind that knows not what it ought to choose, and what to avoid, can never do well: and if a man hastily and unadvisedly pursue an end (which he reasonably propounds to himself), and will not take time to deliberate, he must needs commit many errors. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*] Yet he is unwilling to take the blame upon himself, but commits this grand error after all the rest; that when his own folly, and perhaps wickedness, hath led him to many misfortunes, he imagines God is unkind to him: and is vexed, not at himself, but at the Divine providence; against which he perpetually murmurs.

Ver. 4. *Wealth makes many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.*] Together with riches, a man gets many (and perhaps great and powerful) friends, though he had none before: but he that hath most need of them, is so far from getting any, that, if he had one, he loses even him, when he grows poor. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.*] A false witness, who fears not in open court to accuse the innocent, shall meet at last with a just punishment: nor shall he escape, who privately calumniates and vents his malice in lies to the prejudice of his neighbour. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 6. *Many will entreat the favour of the prince; and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.*] A prince never wants suitors for his favour, which the greatest persons seek with the humblest submissions: and every one loves, or pretends to love him; whose liberality is so well known every where, that it hath procured him the name of a bountiful giver.

Ver. 7. *All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.*] All the kindred of a poor man not only forsake him (as was observed before, ver. 4. xiv. 20.) but hate his company, as a disgrace or a trouble to them; and therefore no wonder if his companions and familiars grow strange to him: he urges them with their former protestations or promises of kindness, but finds they signified nothing; and if he earnestly implore their pity, it is to no purpose.

Ver. 8. *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul; he that keepeth understanding shall find good.*] He that is so considerate, as to value wisdom above riches, and, accordingly, to store his mind with virtuous principles, is the truest lover of himself: and if he strictly observe them, and conduct his life by those rules, he shall find the profit of it.

Ver. 9. *A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall perish.*] He that testifies to a lie, to the perverting of justice, if the judge do not find him out, shall be punished by God: and he who privately whispers slanders against his neighbours, and kindles strife and contention among them, shall perish by those wicked practices.

Ver. 10. *Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.*] Pleasure doth not become a man void of understanding; who is never more ridiculous than when he can do what he lists: and yet empire less becomes a vile slave; who is most intolerably

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insolent, when he can wantonly domineer over the greatest persons. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 11. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*] The world thinks him stupid, who is patient; and without sense of honour, who passes by injuries: but the more understanding any man hath, the slower he is to anger; and the greater his spirit is, the greater his glory and praise, not to revenge a wrong when he hath opportunity.

Ver. 12. *The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion: but his favour is as dew upon the grass.*] But none find it more difficult than a king, especially in the heat of his youth, to bridle his wrath; the signification of which is as dreadful to his subjects, as the roaring of the young lion to the rest of the beasts: and, on the other side, any token of his favour and kindness is so comfortable, that, as the dew restores those herbs, which were parched by the hot beams of the sun; so it revives those who were almost struck dead with the terror of his rage. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 13. *A foolish son is the calamity of his father; and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.*] Two things make a man exceeding unhappy; a dissolute son and a scolding wife: for the former breaks the heart of his father, to see him like to prove the utter destruction of his family: and the other drives a man to undo his family himself, when he is no more able to live at home with her, than to dwell in a rotten and ruinous house, through the roof of which the rain drops perpetually.

Ver. 14. *House and riches are the inheritance of fathers; and a prudent wife is from the Lord.*] The singular providence of God, therefore, is to be acknowledged in a virtuous wife; which is not so easy to get as an estate. For a house, with all its furniture, and land belonging to it, may descend upon us, without our thought, from our progenitors: but great care and prudence are required in the choice of a wife, that knows how to manage a family aright; who is not found neither, without the peculiar direction and blessing of the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.*] As labour makes men vigorous and rich, so sloth and idleness hath these two miserable effects: that it insensibly sinks the mind into a dull stupidity and unconcernedness about the most necessary things; and thereby reduces them unto extreme beggary and want: to which may be added a third; that it tempts them to shirk, and use dishonest arts for a livelihood.

Ver. 16. *He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul: but he that despiseth ways shall die.*] He that carefully observes the commandments of God, as the rule of his life, hath a due care of himself, and consults his soul's safety: but he that minds not what he doth, despising all order and rules of life, is regardless of his own good, and will be very miserable.

Ver. 17. *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*] He that takes compassion on the poor and relieves his necessities, doth not impoverish, but enrich himself. For the Lord looks upon what is given to the poor as lent unto him: and he will not fail to make him a full compensation; or rather return the benefit he hath done to others, with large interest and increase of blessings, upon him and his posterity.

Ver. 18. *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*] Give due and timely correction to thy son for his faults, before he hath gotten a habit of them, and there be little hope of his amendment: but neither proceed to such cruel usage of him, as to make him weary of life, and not to care what becomes of him; nor yet be moved merely by his roaring to abate of thy necessary severity towards him.

Ver. 19. *A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.*] For he whose wrath exceeds all bounds, and makes him severe beyond measure, undoes his child, and consequently himself (nay, all men that are immoderately angry bring great mischiefs upon themselves; and if you help them out of one danger, it doth not make them cautious, but they run into a new trouble); and yet, if he do not punish him at all, he tempts him to go on in his sin; and the same case, whether he shall punish him or not, will return again.

Ver. 20. *Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.*] Listen unto good advice, and be not impatient of reproof; no, nor of correction for thy faults: but receive all thankfully; and learn thereby that wisdom which will do thee service, when all things else will fail thee.

Ver. 21. *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.*] There are many designs and contrivances in the minds of men, which they think are so well laid that they cannot miscarry: but are all defeated by the overruling counsel of the Lord; which alone can inevitably bring to pass whatsoever it pleases.

Ver. 22. *The desire of a man is his kindness; and a poor man is better than a liar.*] There is nothing more desirable to a man, than to have wherewithal to be kind to others, and oblige his friends and neighbours; for nothing makes him more beloved: but it is better to want this power than to have it, and have no will to do good; no, not to those to whom we have made great professions and promises of love and kindness.

Ver. 23. *The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it shall abide satisfied: he shall not be visited with evil.*] Nothing makes a man lead so happy a life as a religious care to please the Lord in all things; which is attended with abundance of blessings, but especially with inward satisfaction of mind: which makes a man sleep quietly and securely, without fear of any evil that can invade him. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 24. *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.*] All things seem so difficult to a lazy wretch, who indulges himself in sloth, and loves his ease; that he would not willingly pull his hands from under his arms; no, not to put his meat into his mouth. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 25. *Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware; and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.*] Punish a derider of religion severely; and though it do him no good, yet those incautious persons whom he hath deluded, will be awakened by it to greater circumspection: but it is sufficient only to chide a well-disposed person for his faults; of which he himself will receive the benefit, and learn to amend them. See Arg. [i]

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Ver. 26. *He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.*] A son that leads a debauched life, too often wastes all his father's estate; and either turns his mother out of doors, or makes her weary of the house: which is so disgraceful, that it makes them ashamed to shew their heads; and will bring him to greater confusion at the last.

Ver. 27. *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*] My son, beware of their discourse, who, under the show of greater learning, seduce thee from the plain paths of virtue; or if thou hast been unhappily engaged in such company, quit it presently, and stick to those that honestly instruct thee: for remember this; to leave off hearing the instruction of good men, is the first step towards a departure from all religion.

Ver. 28. *An ungodly witness scorneth judgment; and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.*] A wicked witness, who hath perfectly discharged all sense of good and evil, mocks if you tell him of law and justice, or of the judgment of God upon perjured persons: for there is no iniquity so great, but there are men as lewdly impious; who do not so much as boggle at it, but will swallow it down as glibly as drunkards do their liquor. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 29. *Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.*] But they shall not mock always; for terrible punishments shall certainly be inflicted upon those that scoff at conscience and religion: nor shall other wicked men escape, who are such fools as to slight these good instructions; but feel at last, to their smart, the doleful effects of their sin, in indelible marks of the Divine displeasure.

CHAP. XX.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] The first precept in this chapter is against *drunkenness*, as an enemy to wisdom, even in common things; much more in those of everlasting consequence: for that it commonly expels out of men's minds all reverence both to God and to others: inclining them to take the licence to say or do any thing without restraint or discretion; and what unruly passions it excites when the brain is disturbed with it, is known to all, and need not be here recited. The word *homeh*, which Solomon here uses, and which we render *raging* or outrageous, includes them all: signifying that discomposed, unquiet, and restless state of mind, which expresses itself in some wild motion or other, according as men are naturally inclined. But nothing worse can be said of it than this, that it makes men either stupid sots, or profane scoffers at religion and all sobriety.

[*b*] Next to this he advises every man to take heed how he suffers himself to be drunk with anger: for nothing else but an intoxication therewith, can make a man so distracted as to fly in the face of majesty. For so that word *hithabber* properly signifies, not to *provoke* the king (though most interpreters, even Bochartus himself, so render it), but to be *angry* at him; which is a kind of madness: for thereby he is provoked to such fury, as is in young lions, who are the fiercest of all others. I have therefore expressed both senses of the word.

[*c*] In the next verse I take *isch* to signify a more than ordinary man; one of the highest rank; and that in wisdom: for it is opposed to a fool; and therefore so I have expounded it.

[*d*] As I have also understood it in ver. 5.; where Solomon observes that there are no men so cunning, but there are others as subtle to find them out. Concerning which art of finding out men, the great Lord Bacon hath given many notable rules (in his second chapter of book viii. of the Advancement of Learning): for though the knowledge itself falls not under precepts, because it is of individuals; yet instructions for the deducing of it may be given. And he observes six ways whereby the knowledge of men may be drawn out and disclosed. By their faces and countenances; by words; by deeds; by their nature; by their ends; and by the relations of others. What he says upon these heads, the reader may there find. I shall only mention this single observation of his; that "the weakest and simplest sort of men are best interpreted by their natures (according to which they commonly act), but the wisest and most reserved, are best expounded by their ends and aims."

[*e*] The next verse is very variously expounded; but our translation seems to come nearest to the sense of the Hebrew words: which may admit also of this construction; which approaches nearer than any other, besides that which we follow:—It is the common inclination of mankind, when they are in need or danger, to call for relief or help from him whom they have obliged: but there are very few, that in such a condition will approve themselves to be faithful friends.

[*f*] The eleventh verse also may be expounded quite contrary ways. Because the word *ithnakker* signifies both to *make one's self known*, and to *make one's self a stranger* unto others. All the ancient interpreters follow, as ours doth, the first sense; which seems most genuine; for nature commonly betrays its inclinations in children so plainly, and they are so strong and violent, that they cannot dissemble them. Yet that (which is the other) is no absurd sense, which some give of these words, *Even children are so cunning as to hide their inclinations: and therefore it is not easy to guess in their childhood, what they will prove when they come to man's estate.* But this is not so common as the other.

[*g*] The next verse some good interpreters expound wholly concerning the happiness a people is in, when the subjects are so humble, that they are inclined meekly to obey their superiors; and their superiors so wise, that they solicitously provide for their safety and good government. Thus Melancthon observes, that in government these two things must concur; good counsel in the governors, and obedience in the people: both of which Solomon acknowledges to be the gift of God. Nay, both these, saith he, must concur in a king; who must not only have good counsellors, but be inclined also to hearken to them, or else he will not be happy. Jeremiah was an excellent monitor, but Zedekiah would not be ruled by him; and so Jerusalem was destroyed: as, on the other side, Hezekiah in former times hearkened to Isaiah, and then it was preserved. *Hæc est principalis sententia hujus dulcissimi dicti.* But I rather look upon this to be that which they call a tropical sense, not the

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literal; and therefore I only note it here, together with this wholesome admonition of that author which follows: "That kingdoms cannot be well governed only by human wisdom; but the assistance of God must be implored both in giving of counsel, and in bowing the will of men to obedience, and in governing events."

[*h*] The fourteenth verse is alleged by the Lord Bacon, as an instance of one of the mere colours of good and evil: teaching us that all is not good which men praise, nor all bad which they discommend. For as *fraud*, the wise man here observes, makes them dispraise that to which they have a mind; so in other cases, out of *ignorance*, or out of *partiality*, or *faction*, nay, sometimes from *natural disposition*, men both disparage that which is praiseworthy, and commend that which is good for little.

But there are other authors, who give a quite different sense of these words; particularly Luther and Melancthon: who by *koneh* do not understand a *buyer*, but an *owner* or *possessor:* and imagine the meaning of this proverb to be, that *men are not wont to like that which they enjoy; but after God hath taken it away from them, then they commend the happiness they have lost.* The last-named writer heaps up abundance of excellent sentences out of the ancients, like this of Thucydides, *ἀεὶ τὸ παρὸν βαρύ, the present is always grievous.* Which arises out of fickleness and inconstancy; or because they are cloyed with what they have long enjoyed; or are impatient of some inconveniences in their present state; but chiefly out of inconsideration, that all conditions will have something troublesome in them; and out of great unthankfulness to God, and insensibleness of his providence, which disposes things better than we can do ourselves. But the word *jithallel*, which we translate *boast*, scarce admits of this sense; and therefore I have not taken notice of it in the Paraphrase.

[*i*] Whether *peninim*, in the next verse, signifies rubies or pearls, or any other sort of precious stone, or none in particular, is not very material: but Bochart, I think, hath demonstrated that it signifies pearls: (par. ii. lib. v. cap. 6. de Sacr. An.) and therefore I have so translated it. And it is not an impertinent argument, which he alleges for this, (cap. 8.) that wisdom in the Scripture is frequently compared to pearls, or preferred before them; as it is here in this place.

[*k*] In the seventeenth verse, under the name of *bread of deceit*, may be comprehended all things got wrongfully: which though they may please a man in the beginning, will bring sorrow and pain in the conclusion: and therefore so I have expressed it in the Paraphrase.

[*l*] There is little difficulty in the verses that follow till we come to the twenty-fifth verse. Where the Vulgar Latin hath been so extremely corrupted, that various interpretations have thence arisen of a very plain sentence, as the words run in the Hebrew. Which are directed against *sacrilege*, as protestant writers universally acknowledge. "A corruption (saith Mr. Cartwright himself) which never more infested the world than in this age: in which most men not only give nothing, but do all they can to take away from that which their ancestors have given, to the service of God, and the support of his ministers, of schools, or of the poor. By which they are guilty not only of their own destruction, but of the loss of the souls of others." The only difference between them herein is, that some take the words to be a censure of the *hypocritical wickedness* of such as, after they have committed sacrilege, and such-like sins, think to make God amends by vows, and sacrifices, and prayers. Thus Luther and Melancthon, and among the reformed (as they are called) De Dieu, who adds this new conjecture, that the first word *mokesch* may be interpreted *by a snare, i. e.* fraudulently and craftily; and then the sense is this: A sacrilegious man finds devices to rob God of things that are consecrated to him; and then makes vows, in hopes by them to expiate his sacrilege.—The whole sentence he also observes may be otherways disposed: but it seems to be so forced and unusual, that I shall not mention it.

[*m*] The like variety of interpretations, the mistake of the Vulgar Latin hath produced in the next verse. Which seems to intend no more than this; That a good king separates the bad from the good by a due execution of his laws; which is like the winnowing of the corn, after the chaff is separated from it, by drawing the wheel over it. For as the flail is the instrument among us of beating the corn out of the husk, so in those hot countries, they made this separation by a wheel drawn by oxen over it: which both pressed out the corn, and brake the straw; as may be seen in Isa. xxviii. 27, 28. and many other places, which our learned countryman, N. Fuller, hath explained in his Miscellanies, (lib. vi. chap. 12.) and Dr. Hammond hath applied to that place of the Psalmist, Psal. lxxviii. 13. though it seemed to me there to have another meaning.

Others by the *wheel* understand here such a sore punishment as that mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 2. xii. 31. and then the meaning is, He will use the utmost rigour to extirpate the wicked, and fright men from their wickedness.

[*n*] The plainest sense also of ver. 27. seems to be that in our translation: the latter part of which the Lord Bacon (with some others) refers to the inquisitive search of man's mind into all manner of things. "For though the wise man says (in Eccles. iii.) that it is impossible for man to find out all the works of God; yet this doth not derogate from the capacity of a man's mind, but may be referred to the impediments of knowledge (such as the shortness of life, janglings among learned men, and refusing to join their studies and labours, unfaithful and depraved tradition of sciences, with many other inconveniences, wherein this present state is entangled); for that no parcel of the world is denied to man's inquiry or invention, he declares in another place; where he saith, The spirit of man is as the lamp of God; wherewith he searcheth into the inwards of all secrets." Thus he in the beginning of his Advancement of Learning. Which, if it be not the full import of the words, is nearer than that sense which others give of them; who by the *candle of the Lord*, understand either the knowledge of God himself, which penetrates into the secrets of all men's thoughts; or else his Divine favour and love; the sense of which marvellously recreates and refreshes the soul; and is as it were the life of man, penetrating through his whole body.

[o] Upon the next verse Kab-venaki hath this note; That by *chesed*, the *mercy*, which Solomon here commends

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unto a king, we are to understand, an exceeding great excess of goodness and kindness; even towards those who are not worthy of it: and by *emeth, truth,* his keeping his word exactly, and loving and sincerely practising this virtue. Which two will keep him from all harm; but it is that excessive degree of goodness alone, which establishes and settles him in the throne of his kingdom. A proverb directly contrary to the wicked *maxims* of Machiavel, as Schickard observes in his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 4.

[*p*] The last verse some take to be a description of the depraved condition of human nature; which makes men as loath to be cured of their sins by sharp and severe rebukes, &c. as to be beaten till lumps be raised in the flesh, &c. So they make *tamrickbere,* the *cleansing* or scouring *of an evil man,* to be the subject of which he speaks. And then the paraphrase should run thus; To rub up a wicked man, and chide him soundly for his sins, is as grievous to him as to beat him till he be bruised, and so sore, that he complains his very bowels are hurt and in anguish by it. This I have not wholly neglected; but yet followed the common exposition: which is, That the severest corporal punishments are necessary for the cure of some offenders.

Ver. 1. *WINE is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*] Let him whose design it is to be wise and good, take heed of accustoming himself to excess of wine, and such-like liquors; which is inconsistent with it: for drunkenness not only disposes a man to be abusive and scurrilous, in deriding even things most serious and sacred; but to be so furious, tumultuous, and quarrelsome, as declares him both to be a fool, and incapable of being otherwise. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.*] The displeasure of a king strikes terror into men, and makes them tremble, as they are wont to do at the roaring of a young lion, which comes with open jaws to devour them: it is best therefore to submit to him; for whosoever provokes him, especially by angry and exasperating language, brings his own life (as well as his soul) into very great danger. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.*] It is below a wise man, or one that is truly great, to scold and brawl; or if a quarrel be begun, it is no disparagement to him (but the noblest thing he can do) to withdraw himself from it, and let it rest: but all fools and lewd persons love to thrust themselves into contention; and fancy, when they are engaged in strife, they are bound in honour to maintain it. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 4. *The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*] The smallest difficulty frights a lazy person from the most necessary undertaking: for instance, he will not rise to plough his ground in autumn, when the morning air grows sharp, for fear of catching cold: by which means he exposes himself to far greater hardships; for in the harvest-time, when plenty crowns the labours of other men, he turns beggar, and nobody pities him, or will relieve him.

Ver. 5. *Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water: but a man of understanding will draw it out.*] There is nothing but may be compassed by wisdom. For though the designs and intentions of another man, especially that hath a deep wit, are as hard to be sounded as waters that lie in the secret caverns of the earth; yet there are persons of such penetrating understandings, and of so great a reach, that they will find means to discover them and draw them out. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 6. *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?*] It is such an honour to be kind and to do good to others, that a great part of mankind value themselves very much upon the mere pretence of it; every one of them boasting what he hath done, or will do upon occasion: though, alas! in a time of trial, it is very hard to find so much as one of them that will be as good as his word. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 7. *The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.*] But whosoever he be, that is endued with this rare virtue of being just to his word; and so sincerely charitable, that he persevereth in his virtue to the end of his days; he shall not only fare the better for it, and enjoy great satisfaction in himself, while he lives; but his children after him shall reap the happy fruits of his unfeigned love to God and man.

Ver. 8. *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.*] A prince attentive to his people's good, who doth not give up himself to pleasure, nor abandon all his care of his affairs to his ministers, but sits constantly himself to do justice to his people; prevents a world of mischief by his very presence in the courts of judgments: and by his strict observance how things are carried, and careful search into men's causes, keeps both judges and pleaders, and all men else, within the bounds of their duty; and applies fitting and seasonable remedies to all the public grievances.

Ver. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*] There is no man so perfect, that he hath nothing left to do; for who can say, and say truly, that he hath not the least evil affection remaining in him, no unruly passion stirring in his soul? or that he is so free from every sin, that he needs no further purifying?

Ver. 10. *Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.*] It is not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat and cozen their neighbours; for instance, to buy by a weight or a measure too heavy and big, and to sell by those that are too light and scanty: for these are alike displeasing to the Lord; nay, such injustice is detestable to him beyond expression.

Ver. 11. *Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.*] It is not hard to give a shrewd conjecture, what a child is like to prove when he is a man: for not only youths, but little children, make early discoveries by their behaviour, by their contrivances, by their dealings one with another; nay, by their very sports and pastimes, and such things wherein they delight, whether their future life will probably be modest and honest; free, that is, from lasciviousness, impurity, and such-like vices; and void also of fraud, and guile, and malignity of spirit. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 12. *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them.*] As the Lord is to be acknowledged the fountain of all good; particularly of those excellent and useful senses whereby the knowledge of all

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things is conveyed to us: so the towardly disposition which we observe to be in any child, to listen to instruction, and a clear understanding to discern, with a sound judgment to resolve aright, are likewise, above all things, to be peculiarly ascribed to the Divine grace. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 13. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.*] But our industry must be joined with God's blessing, in the faithful improvement of those faculties, or good inclinations he hath given us. And therefore let not idleness make thee indulge thyself in too much sleep; which is the way to beggary: but get up betime, and apply thyself, with attentive care, to some honest labour; and then thy desire of all things necessary shall not want satisfaction.

Ver. 14. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*] The buyer sometimes is as unjust and deceitful as the seller; (ver. 10.) for when he cheapens a commodity, he disparages it to such a degree, as if he thought it nothing worth: but having purchased it, upon his own terms, he goes away and brags how subtle he was, and laughs at the simplicity of him that sold it at so vile a rate. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 15. *There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.*] Some think themselves rich, and powerful, and happy, because they have treasures of gold, or perhaps heaps of pearls, or other precious stones: but among all the jewels, or ornaments, or furniture, that are most esteemed, there is none comparable unto true wisdom; especially joined with eloquence; which can do more than them all. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 16. *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.*] It is rank folly to trust to him, who is so rash as to be bound for one, whose ability and fidelity are utterly unknown to him; especially for a woman whose loose way of life makes her credit justly suspected: therefore have nothing to do with such an inconsiderate person, without the utmost security that he can give thee, for the payment of what he owes thee.

Ver. 17. *Bread of deceit is sweet to a man: but afterward his mouth shall be filled with gravel.*] Do not satisfy thy appetite of wealth by fraud, lying, or bribery; nor thy desires of pleasure by adultery or fornication: for though this may be sweet for the present, it is but like the pleasure of gritty bread, which may relish well to a hungry man, when it is first tasted; but being chewed, hurts the palate, cuts the gums, or breaks the teeth, with the sharp and rough gravel that is in it. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 18. *Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice make war.*] Rashness spoils the best designs; which must be carried on prudently, and with good advice, if we would have them prove successful: and above all other, warlike expeditions are not to be undertaken without great deliberation; nor can be well managed without exact conduct, and subtle contrivance: unto which the victory is commonly more to be ascribed, than unto force.

Ver. 19. *He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*] He whose trade it is to ingratiate himself by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have entrusted him: (xi. 13.) therefore suspect a fawning fellow, and have no familiarity with him; for his drift is, to entice thee to talk what he intends to carry about to others.

Ver. 20. *Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.*] He that not only slights and despises, but reproaches, and wishes mischief to his father or mother, shall bring the heaviest punishments on himself, and on his posterity: who, the happier they were before, shall be the more miserable, by falling from a flourishing, into the most dismal condition.

Ver. 21. *An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.*] Make not too much haste to be rich; for though, with a great deal of bustle and stir, an estate may in a short time be heaped up, yet the foundation of it being laid in rapine, extortion, or fraud, it moulders away many times as suddenly as it was gotten; and it is certain will not prosper unto many generations.

Ver. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.*] Be patient, and do not so much as resolve to take revenge for any injury thou hast received (of which thou art not the proper judge, nor like to do exact justice in it), but leave thy cause to the Lord, and expect his righteous sentence; believing steadfastly he will not only do thee right, but defend thee from farther injuries; which thou fanciest, perhaps, thou shalt invite by thy forgiving those that are past.

Ver. 23. *Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.*] To buy by one weight, and to sell by another, is extremely odious, not only to all honest men, but much more to the Lord; which was said before: (ver. 10.) but is a sin so heinous, and yet so commonly practised, that this is fit to be repeated again; that it is a most wicked thing to cheat another, though it be but in a little matter, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 24. *Men's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?*] There is no man, great or small, that can take one step towards any thing he designs, without the permission and direction also of the Lord; who overrules their motions unto ends so far distant from men's thoughts, that it is impossible for them to know what the event shall be, of any thing they undertake.

Ver. 25. *It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.*] There are two pieces of profaneness, which entangle him that is guilty of them, in great troubles; nay, bring ruin upon him. First, when he makes no distinction between things holy and common; but converts that which was consecrated to God (the first-fruits, suppose, or such-like sacred things) to his own proper use: and secondly, when he vows in his distress to give something unto God; but having obtained his desires, studies how he may be loosed from his obligations. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 26. *A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.*] Such impious persons can no more stand before a religious prince, than the chaff before the wind: but he disperses them all, and thrashes them (as we speak) so severely, that the country is clean purged, and freed from such wicked wretches. See Arg. [*m*]

Ver. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*] That active spirit, which the Lord hath breathed into man, is like a torch lighted at the Divine understanding, to guide and di-

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rect him in all his motions; and to make reflections upon them afterward: nay, to penetrate also into the most secret designs of other men, that he may not be deceived by them. See Arg. [n]

Ver. 28. *Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.*] The best and strongest guards for the preservation of a prince's person, and for the security of his government, are bounty and clemency, joined with justice and faithfulness to his word: and if either of the two be of greater force than the other, for their support and maintenance, it is a high degree of bounty and benignity; which settles him fast in all men's affections, and entails the kingdom upon his posterity. See Arg. [o]

Ver. 29. *The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is the gray head.*] That which makes young men honoured is their strength, and vigour, and courage; whereby they are capable to serve for the defence of their country: but that which makes old men venerable, is their aged gravity and experience, which qualify them to advise and consult for its safety.

Ver. 30. *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil; so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.*] It is impossible to mend some persons without blows; and those not gentle neither, but severe: and therefore, though it be a very sharp and grievous remedy, which they by all means avoid, it must not be forborne; but they are rather to be beaten black and blue, and scourged till their very hearts ache, than not be cleansed from their impurity. See Arg. [p]

CHAP. XXI.

ARGUMENT.

[a] This chapter begins with a sentence, which Themistius, a pagan philosopher and orator, seems to have notice of, and mentions as very memorable in the Assyrian (as he is supposed to call the Hebrew) writings: and commends to the thoughts of the Emperor Valens, in a speech he made to him, Orat. ix. But if he had respect to this proverb of Solomon's, he will not fully comprehend the sense of it; for he takes notice only of a prince's mind being in the custody and under the guard of God. For thus he translates it, ὁ νοῦς τοῦ Βασιλέως ἐν τῇ Θεοῦ παλάμῃ δορυφορεῖται, *the mind of the king is kept in safe custody in the hand of God.* From whence he draws this inference, that a king ought to be very sensible what danger he is in, if he go about any thing contrary to the mind of God; because he then is in peril to fall out of the hand which preserves and keeps him. Nay, thou oughtest, O king (saith he), not only to design nothing thyself but what is holy; but they that are about thee ought to speak to thee nothing that is not so: for every word that comes to thy ears is written in his uncorrupted hand. But though this be a most excellent admonition, worthy to be written in the hearts of all princes, That it is very unbecoming to have any evil thing, any thing impure, or in the least blemished with cruelty or inhumanity, in that heart, which those most holy and most gracious and benign hands of God carry in their keeping; yet there is a great deal more than these Assyrian letters or pictures, which he speaks of, express. For Solomon would have them, and us, sensible that they cannot manage things by their power, as they think good; but depend upon a higher Cause, who orders all their motions, good and bad, to such ends as he proposes to himself, quite contrary to their intentions and inclinations. Which is an instruction sufficient to correct the pride of the most absolute monarch, and the impatience of the most oppressed subject.

[b] Next to which follows (ver. 2.) a caution against thinking too well of ourselves: which had been delivered before; (xvi. 2.) but for the weightiness, I suppose, of the matter, and the proneness of men to flatter themselves, and not to judge sincerely of their own actions, is here again repeated.

And then there is a caution added (ver. 3.) against hypocrisy; which thinks to please God with ceremonies, without moral honesty.

[c] In the fourth verse the meaning is something uncertain, from the different acceptations of the word *ner* or *nir:* which the Greek, the Latin, and other interpreters, translate, not *ploughing*, or *ploughed fields;* but the *light*, the *splendour*, of the wicked. I have had respect to both senses; understanding by *ploughing*, the study, contrivance, and business, of wicked men. And the sentence may be inverted in this manner: *Sin is the pride, the ambition, the glory, and joy* (or the business), *of wicked men.* That, upon which they value themselves, and for which they think themselves brave fellows, &c. is, that they dare do wickedly: or we may make two sentences of this verse, to this purpose:—Men that have proud and lofty thoughts have very ambitious desires, and an insatiable appetite; which put them upon much wickedness: nay, the very business and employment of all wicked men (as well as their pleasure) are nothing but sin. And this word *ner* signifying a *yoke*, among the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Arabians, Lud. de Dieu thinks this no improper sense: *Superciliousness and swelling of the heart* (or mind) *are a yoke intolerable, and proper to the wicked.* Castalio alone understands by *sin*, the effects of sin, to this sense: *Pride and haughtiness of mind are deadly enemies to that happiness and pleasure which the wicked pursue:* for instead of making them greater, as they fancy, they lay them low in all men's opinions, and expose them to their hatred, &c. I omit other interpretations.

[d] In the seventh verse there are different opinions about the force of the word *jegorem:* most of which I have endeavoured to express in the Paraphrase. And there is no little obscurity in the next verse: but besides that sense which I have represented, the words are capable of another, which is as plain; *viz.* As the man is, so are his works; a man of tricks will act strangely (quite different from all the rules whereby we ought to govern ourselves), but an honest man you may know where to have; for he acts conformable to the laws of righteousness.

[e] In the eleventh verse, De Dieu thinks both parts of it ought to be referred to one and the same subject; *viz. peti*, the *simple:* who, saith Solomon (according to this construction of the words), may be instructed two ways. One is, by the punishments which are inflicted upon a scorner; which works upon his fear: the other is, when he attends to the wise, and observes God's great goodness to him; which works upon his love. Wherein he seems to have respect also to another signification of the word *bemaschil*, besides that of attending to information

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and instruction: for it sometimes imports that happiness and prosperity wherewith God blesses the wise and prudent. But that sense which I have followed in the Paraphrase, seems nearest to the Hebrew: and agrees best with what was said before, (xix. 25.) And it being usual, in this book, to repeat the same sentence in divers places, in different words, I have therefore kept to that sense. But if any like the other (which the Vulgar Latin also follows, making both parts of the sentence to respect *the simple*), the plainest interpretation of the latter part of it seems to me to be this:—When instruction is given to the wise, the simple also learn something; by observing how diligently even the wise hearken to it. And in this sense the word *Maschil*, with *lamed* after it, is used in the next verse; *the just considers the house of the wicked.*

[*f*] Which, though it seems very plain, yet there are great varieties in the interpretation of it; because of the following part of the verse. In which many put in the word *Jehovah*, or *God*, to supply the sense (as we do), but without any necessity; there being a clear and obvious sense (which I have expressed in the Paraphrase), without any such supplement; if we do but take the *just man* for a just magistrate, and not for a private person.

[*g*] There is little difficulty after this, till we come to the twenty-fourth verse; where he either gives this character of a scorner, that he is proud and arrogant, and does all things in the *wrath of his pride* (as the words are in the Hebrew), or describes the proud and arrogant man to be a scorner also, and full of haughty wrath. It is not of much concern which way we take it; for the sense will, in a manner, be the same. I have expressed the Hebrew, as near as I could, in my Paraphrase, taking the construction thus:—A proud and haughty person, who may well be called a scorner, proceeds furiously and insufferably in all that he doth.

[*h*] In the last verse Solomon mentions the *horse* instead of all warlike preparations: because it was the chief; and all nations placed much of their confidence in the number and strength of their horses. But that the Israelites might not do so too, there was a special provision made in their law against it, (Deut. xvii. 16.) Notwithstanding which, they were so prone to this vain confidence, that Joshua, in his wars against the Canaanites, houghed all the horses he took after a great victory: that is, cut their ham-strings, and thereby made them unserviceable: which he did by an express command from God, (Josh. xi. 6. 9.) and the reason of it was (as Kimchi well observes) to prevent a false conceit which might have arisen in the people's mind; that they owed their good success to them, had they made use of those horses in future battles. Which Solomon also here endeavours to prevent: for, though he had a great number of horses to increase that splendour which was peculiar to him above all kings, yet he would have them know he did not trust in them; nor would have the people imagine they were a whit the more secure, because they were so well appointed for war, if they did not carefully obey the laws of God; and from him look for deliverance.

Ver. 1. *THE king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.*] It is not in the power of kings (much less of other men) either to do, or to design, what they please; but their very wills are subject to the great Lord of all; who diverts them as easily from what they intend, or inclines them to that which they resolve against, as the gardener draws the streams of water through the trenches he cuts, unto what part of the ground he thinks good. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts.*] There is nothing that a man doth or designs (especially if he be great and potent), but, such is the fond affection he hath for himself, he fancies to be exactly good: when in the account of the Lord, who searches into the secrets of men's souls, and knows the just value of every thing, they are very defective, if not grossly wicked. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*] Men imagine, for example, that their devotion towards God will satisfy for their breach of faith, their uncharitableness and injurious actions, towards men: when he prefers the practice of truth, of mercy, and justice, before the richest sacrifices that can be offered to him.

Ver. 4. *A high look, and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked, is sin.*] The pride, the insolence, the ambition, and vast desires; nay, all the designs and contrivances of wicked men, with all the prosperous successes they have in them, lead them into abundance of sins; and in the issue into no less miseries. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty, only to want.*] He that to prudent counsels and contrivances adds an honest diligence, is likely to grow rich: but he that acts inconsiderately in his business, or greedily catches at every advantage, whether by right or wrong: or undertakes more than he can manage, out of an eager desire to grow rich presently, is most like to be a beggar.

Ver. 6. *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*]. There are men that make it their business, with much labour, to heap up wealth, though it be by lying, or flattery, or calumny, or perjury: but as such treasures are no more durable than heaps of chaff, or clouds of smoke, which are soon dissipated by the wind; so they expose the owners of them to many dangers, and at last bring them, by their own diligence, to a woful end.

Ver. 7. *The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.*] For the rapine of such wicked men, whereby they have destroyed other families, and made them desolate, shall fall in most grievous and dreadful punishments upon themselves; which they shall not be able to shake off, till they be utterly destroyed; because they knowingly injured their neighbours, and obstinately denied to make them satisfaction.

Ver. 8. *The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.*] For a man whose life is nothing but wiliness and craft, imposture and deceit, is so alienated from God, that he is very odious to him, and to all good men: but he that is sincere and free from all fraud and guile approves himself in all his actions, and is most acceptable and dear to both. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 9. *It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.*] It is much

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more desirable to live poorly and solitarily in the open air, exposed to all the injuries of the weather; nay, to be thrust into a little corner on the top of the house; than to have a spacious habitation and numerous family, governed by a contentious wife: whose perpetual scolding and brawling within doors, upon the least occasion, is more intolerable than the thunder, and the lightning, and the blustering winds, which may molest him without.

Ver. 10. *The soul of the wicked desireth evil; his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.*] An impious man is so set upon mischief, that he is not satisfied till he hath effected his desire: nor will he spare either friend or foe, to serve his ambition, his covetousness, or whatsoever evil affection it is that reigns in him.

Ver. 11. *When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise; and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.*] Lay a heavy fine or other punishment upon a derider of religion; and though it do him no good, yet such simple persons as were only incautiously deluded by him, will make some wise reflections on it, and be the better for it: as for him that is wise already, it is sufficient only to give him good admonitions; of which he himself will receive the profit, and amend what is amiss in him. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 12. *The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.*] A just judge makes a prudent, but strict, scrutiny into all the actions of a wicked man's family; that he may so punish them for their rapine, violence, and extortion, as to deprive them of all power to do any farther mischief. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 13. *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.*] He who is so far from relieving the poor, though they lie under most grievous calamities, that he plainly declares their petitions are very troublesome to him; shall fall into the like straits and pressures himself: and, which is worse, be denied when they force him to cry for help.

Ver. 14. *A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.*] Men do not love to be thought so weak as to do any thing for money; but such is its power, if it be secretly conveyed, that they will resign their strongest resentments to it: their anger, for instance, will yield to a gift; nay, a rich present, prudently placed, will extinguish that wrath which was thought implacable.

Ver. 15. *It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.*] The execution of justice is a joy to him that hath observed the laws; but a terror to those that have violated them by their wicked deeds: who look upon themselves as in danger to be undone thereby.

Ver. 16. *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.*] He that will not live by those wise laws which God hath prescribed him, but follows the conduct of his own foolish lusts and passions, shall after all his extravagances be sent down to hell; and there confined to the company of the old giants, who, giving themselves over to debauched courses, were swept away with a deluge. (See ii. 18. ix. 18.)

Ver. 17. *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*] Nay, before he goes thither he may suffer very much; for it is too frequently seen that voluptuous men destroy their own pleasures, by wasting their estates, and bringing themselves to extreme beggary: at the best, he can never thrive, who loves to feast and to live delicately.

Ver. 18. *The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.*] Nay, such is the distinction which Divine Providence makes between the good and bad, that righteous men are not only strangely delivered from those dangers which others fall into; but preserved from mischief, by its seizing on the wicked: and men sincerely virtuous, escape in a common calamity; when they that prevaricate with God and with religion, by that very means (which they thought was best for their safety) are overwhelmed in it.

Ver. 19. *It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.*] It is more eligible (as was said before, ver. 9.) to dwell quietly, in the most rueful place upon earth, than to live in a palace with a contentious wife: whom nothing can please; but is uneasy and angry at every thing, and always gives provoking language.

Ver. 20. *There is a treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise: but a foolish man spendeth it up.*] Wisdom furnishes a man not only with the necessaries, but with all the conveniences and pleasures of life, that he can reasonably desire; which it teaches him also to enjoy with great satisfaction, though but in a small habitation: but such is the folly of a wicked man, that he lavishly spends all those treasures, which he knows not how to get, nor how to live without.

Ver. 21. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.*] He that makes it his business to be good; not contenting himself merely with doing no harm, but greedily laying hold on all occasions to exercise justice and mercy, shall lead a most happy life; for, besides the satisfaction and pleasure he hath in doing good, he shall preserve himself from being injured, and oblige all to be kind to him, and be highly esteemed, honoured, and praised every where.

Ver. 22. *A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.*] The virtue of the mind is of greater force, and more prevalent, than strength of body: for a whole city of mighty men are not able to resist a wise and pious commander that besieges them; but they are either taken by his cunning stratagems, or they yield themselves to his eminent goodness; unto which they trust more than to their fortifications.

Ver. 23. *Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles.*] He that is wary and cautious in his talk, thinking seriously before he opens his mouth, and taking care to offend neither God nor man by what he speaks, preserves his mind from a great deal of trouble, and himself from dangerous distresses.

Ver. 24. *Proud and haughty scorner is his name who dealeth in proud wrath.*] He that is puffed up with a great conceit of himself, whose ambition makes him insatiable in his desires, as he regards neither God nor man, so he cannot endure the least opposition, nor do any thing with moderation; but, being easily enraged with insolent fierceness and cruelty, proceeds against those that cross his designs. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour.*] A sluggard hath desires as well as other men: which must needs be a perpetual torment to

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him, because he will not be at the pains to give them satisfaction: nay, they bring him sometimes to a miserable end; because his sloth moves him to make provision for them by robbery, or other unlawful ways, rather than by following some honest but laborious calling.

Ver. 26. *He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth, and spareth not.*] Nor is there any measure in his desires; but, as they are endless, so they are exceeding eager and restless, to his own and others' great disturbance; but he that is diligent and honest is so far from desiring, much less stealing, his neighbour's goods, that he freely gives away his own, and hath not the less thereby, but still enough to spare.

Ver. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?*] God is so far from being pleased merely with sacrifices, (xv. 8.) that when they are offered by impious men, who never think of amending their lives, he detests them; though presented with never so specious a show of piety: especially when, at that very time, they have some wicked design in their heads, which they think to sanctify by their sacrifices.

Ver. 28. *A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.*] He that for money, or love, or hatred, shall testify any thing of which he hath no knowledge, shall soon lose his credit, and at last come to a miserable end: (xix. 9.) but he that, in obedience to God, testifies nothing but what he hath attentively heard or seen; as he never varies from what he deposes, so he shall always be believed, and continue in good esteem, as long as he lives.

Ver. 29. *A wicked man hardeneth his face; but as for the upright, he directeth his way.*] All the endeavours of a man resolvedly wicked, are to grow so impudent, that he may not blush at what he doth; nor be moved, in the least, by any man's admonitions or reproofs: but a man sincerely virtuous is so different from him, that he himself examines and censures his own actions if they be amiss; and makes it all his care so to live, that he may not be ashamed of what he doth.

Ver. 30. *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord.*] It is folly to design any thing which is not approved by the Lord: for let it be managed with all the skill that natural sagacity, long study and experience can furnish men withal; with the most prudent foresight also of all contingencies; and with mature and deliberate advice about the most effectual means, and with due application of them to the end; they all signify nothing when they oppose the counsels and decrees of Heaven.

Ver. 31. *The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.*] Nor is power and force, though never so great, more significant than counsel and advice: for after an army of horses, and chariots, and valiant soldiers, are set in battle array, they can give no security of victory, without the Divine favour and help; from whom alone therefore both safety and prosperous success are to be expected. See Arg. [*h*]

CHAP. XXII.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] After an admonition not to set too great a price upon riches, (ver. 1.) there follows another (ver. 2.) unto rich men; not to set too great a value upon themselves; but with an instruction also to the poor, not to be discontented with their condition; the rich having as much need of them as they have of the rich: Greg. Nazianzen, indeed, (Orat. xvi. p. 263.) is of opinion that Solomon doth not say, that God hath made one man poor and another rich, οὐ γὰρ δῆλον εἰ θεόθεν ἡ τοιαύτη διαίρεσις, *for it is not apparent that such a distinction is from God:* but his meaning is only this, that πλάσμα Θεοῦ ὁμοίως ἀμφότεροι, καὶ εἶτα ἔξωθεν ἄνισοι, *they are both alike the workmanship of God, though in external regards they be unequal.* Which ought to shame rich men into sympathy and brotherly-kindness towards them: that when they are apt to be lifted up because of those things wherein they are unequal, they may be taken down again and become more moderate, when they consider how in the greatest things they are both alike.

But I have had a respect to the other thing also in my Paraphrase: because, if God did not intend in the beginning so great a disparity as we now see (which this is not a place to dispute), yet some disparity it may be easily proved he did design; the mean condition, that is (though not beggary), of some, in comparison with others. Which serves many wise ends of his providence: nay, beggary may be very useful, to give the greater occasion of liberality on the one hand, and of patience, humility, and honest diligence, on the other. And to be commended for these virtues is much better than to be rich, as he observes in the first verse. Where Melancthon hath a large discourse to shew that it is lawful, nay necessary, to endeavour after a good fame: according to that saying, *I have need of a good conscience with respect to God, and of a good name for the sake of my neighbours.* And he alleges some ancient sentences to the same purpose with this of Solomon; as that of Publius, *Honestus rumor alterum patrimonium est:* and that of Plautus, *Honestam famam si servasso, sat ero dives.*

[*b*] There are more observations about riches, in ver. 7—9. which seem to me to have a dependance one upon the other; and so I have considered them in the Paraphrase. And in the next verse but one, (ver. 11.) I have followed the judgment of Lud. de Dieu, who thinks Solomon observes two fruits of pureness of heart; one, that the word of such a man may be relied on; and the other, that the king (who loves not to be deceived) will be his friend upon that account. This seems nearest to the Hebrew; unless we will take it thus: Two things recommend a man to the affection of a prince, his *integrity* and his *eloquence:* which make him very capable to do his prince service. And then the paraphrase must run thus:—He that loves sincerity above all things, and is able to deliver his mind in acceptable language, is fit to be privy-counsellor to a king.

[*c*] And to this, I conceive, he hath some respect in the next verse; where by *daath, knowledge,* in the first part of it, we are to understand (the other part of the verse shews), Men truly knowing, and who speak according to their knowledge.

[*d*] In the thirteenth verse, there is an admirable description of the disposition of slothful persons, who raise difficulties in their own fancies, where there are none; or,

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pretending them greater than they are, will not so much as attempt any thing, because it is possible they may meet with insuperable hinderances. Which some have, not unfitly, applied to cowardly magistrates, who dare not punish great and powerful offenders; but excuse themselves, saying, He is a mighty man, there is no dealing with him, &c. Whereas a worthy magistrate (as an excellent prelate of our own, Bishop Sanderson, speaks) would choose to meet with such a *lion;* that he might make God's *ordinance* to be reverenced, and clear the way for others, by tearing *such a beast* in pieces; "and would no more fear to make a worshipful thief, or a right worshipful murderer (if such a one should come in his circuit), an example of justice; than to twitch up a poor sheep-stealer."

But the Lord Bacon applies it, no less wittily, to the laziness of mankind, in the Advancement of Learning, (lib. i. chap. *ult.*) the knowledge of some things being so abstruse, that it is impossible to be compassed by human industry. Whereas "all those things are to be held possible and performable, which may be accomplished by some persons, though not by every one; and which may be done by the united labours of many, though not by any one part; and which may be effected in a succession of ages, though not in the same age; and, in brief, which may be finished by the public care and charge, though not by the abilities and industry of particular persons." But there is no excuse for those who will not set themselves to any inquiries, because some things cannot be known. Which is perfectly the temper of the sluggard Solomon here mentions; who, because a *lion* sometimes comes into the street, would not stir out of his doors. It was not ordinary, you must know, for *lions* to come into towns; no, nor to rove in the day-time: (the night being their season, Psal. civ. 20.) but sometimes by the Divine vengeance they were stirred up to leave the deserts, and go to inhabited places; (Jer. v. 6. 2 Kings xvii. 25, 26.) and likewise, if we may believe the great philosopher (in his History of Animals), when they grow old, πρὸς τὰς πόλεις ἔρχονται μάλιστα, &c. they haunt cities more than other places; because then they are not so able to prey upon beasts, and therefore lie in wait for men. The same is affirmed by Pliny, as Bochartus observes, lib. iii. cap. 2. par. i.

[*e*] In the sixteenth verse I have followed our translation, and expressed the sense to as much advantage as I could. But I think the Vulgar Latin, which Luther and some others follow, comes nearer to the Hebrew, which runs thus: *He that squeezes the poor to increase his own estate, gives to the rich* (not to secure what he hath gotten, but) *only to impoverish it:* that is, He shall be squeezed by some mightier person than himself: and so the paraphrase, in more words, should be this:—

Such is the just providence of almighty God, that he who, to enlarge his own estate or power, oppresseth the poor by violence or deceit, shall meet with the like extortion from others more powerful than himself; and thereby be reduced to as poor a condition as those whom he oppressed.

Ver. 1. *A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*] Riches are not so great a good as men imagine; for a wise man will prefer the fame of using them well (or any other virtue) much before them: and choose much rather to be esteemed and beloved of good men, than to be possessed of abundance of silver and gold. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.*] The world doth not consist all of rich, nor all of poor; but they are mixed together, and have need of one another: and will agree well enough, and not clash one against another, if they both consider, that there is one Lord, who is the creator of both; and hath, by his providence, ordered this inequality for their mutual good. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 3. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*] He whose long experience and observation of things hath made him cautious and circumspect, foresees a calamity before it comes; and withdraws himself from the danger, into a place of safety: but an incautious and credulous person is easily abused by crafty men, to overlook the mischief, which even they intend against him; and so he goes on securely in his accustomed track, till it overtakes him.

Ver. 4. *By humility, and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life.*] A modest sense of a man's self, and humble submission to the meanest condition, arising from a religious regard to the Divine Majesty, is the way to be promoted, both to wealth and to honour; and to enjoy them both also a long time in joy and pleasure.

Ver. 5. *Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward; he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.*] The life of a man that winds and turns any way, to bring about his ends, is very scandalous to others; and will entangle him at last in most grievous troubles: he, therefore, that hath a care of his soul, will have no society with such persons; and thereby avoid the danger of being undone by them.

Ver. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.*] Instruct a child as soon as ever he is capable, and season his mind with the principles of virtue, before he receives other impressions: and it is most likely they will grow up with him; so that when he is older he will not forsake them, but retain them as long as he lives.

Ver. 7. *The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*] Riches draw dominion along with them over the meaner sort; nay, though a man be not absolutely poor, yet, if he be forced to borrow, he loses his liberty, and depends upon the will and pleasure of the lender.

Ver. 8. *He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity; and the rod of his anger shall fail.*] But let not such abuse their power, for no man can reap better than he sows; but if he do injury to others, it shall produce his own trouble: and the authority which he employs vexatiously and spitefully shall fail him, and not be able to bear him out in his inhumanity.

Ver. 9. *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.*] On the other side, he that, beholding the miserable condition of others, takes compassion upon them, and friendly relieves them, shall be blessed by God, and commended by men: because he doth not put them off to be supplied by others, but imparts of his own goods to him that cannot requite him again.

Ver. 10. *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out;*

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yea, strife and reproach shall cease.] Throw the scoffer, who derides all things, out of a society, and contention, which he is wont to raise, will go out together with him: there will be no quarrels, no suits, no reproachful words, wherewith contending persons are apt to bespatter one another, when such insolent and turbulent men are excluded.

Ver. 11. *He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.*] He whose heart is so free from guile, that he places his pleasure in the integrity of his conscience, will never gloss, nor flatter, nor study to put false colours upon things, but speak ingenuously, according to the sincere sense of his soul; upon both which accounts a wise prince will value him, and advise with him as a friend. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 12. *The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge; and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*] There is a special providence of God which watches over honest men (who speak as they think), and which prospers the advice they give, and the affairs they manage: but he subverts such as are treacherous and perfidious; and blasts all their counsels and designs. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 13. *The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.*] A slothful man never wants pretences to excuse himself from labours; for he can feign to himself imaginary difficulties, and make a dreadful representation of them: affrighting himself with dangers where there are none; or which happen very rarely. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 14. *The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.*] When thou art enticed by the beauty and blandishments of those lewd women, from whom thou oughtest to estrange thyself as far as they are estranged from God, (see ii. 16.) remember that they allure thee into such a gulf of utter destruction, that to fall into their familiarity, is a mark of the highest displeasure of almighty God against thee, for some other crimes.

Ver. 15. *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*] False opinions and bad inclinations stick so close sometimes to the mind and will of a child, and are so twisted with them, that no admonitions, no reproofs, nor the wisest discourses, but only prudent and seasonable chastisement, and that not without some severity, will remove such obstinate folly.

Ver. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*] There are some men have such a mixture of ill qualities, that at the same time they will take from the poor to enrich themselves, though it be by violence or fraud; and give to the rich and powerful to wink at their oppressions: but all in vain; for such practices shall surely bring them to beggary. See Arg. [*e*]

PART II.

CHAP. XXII. (CONTINUED.)

ARGUMENT.

Now from this verse, there is scarce any interpreter but hath observed another form of speech, much different from the former, begins, and continues unto the twenty-fifth chapter: and therefore it may not unfitly be called, *the second part of the book of Proverbs.*

From the beginning of the tenth chapter to this place, the instructions of wisdom are delivered in short sentences, and *Proverbs,* properly so called; which have seldom any connexion one with another, or not easily discerned; shewing what is good or bad, true or false, &c. But now follow exhortations and precepts, in the *imperative mood* of speech, and those comprehended in two or three or more verses, before he finishes what he intends. In which alteration, some think the weakness of the reader is consulted: who being weary of the sententious way of instruction, may be refreshed and awakened unto new attention, by varying the form of writing. And thus the son of Sirach, after his *gnomæ,* or sentences, adds an earnest exhortation to the study of wisdom and virtue, like this of Solomon, in the following *section,* which I call his *second part.* Which may have respect both to that which follows: as if he had said, Let not all that hath been said be lost, or superficially regarded; but take a serious review of the foregoing counsels: and give ear also to what I have farther to deliver, &c.

[*f*] And to move the greater attention, he commends them (ver. 20.) under the name of *schalischim, words fit for a prince to speak, and the best men in the world to hear:* which we truly, therefore, render *excellent things.* There is another notion of the word, I know, which I have not altogether neglected; but it always signifying in the Bible, either *great captains,* and *commanders,* and *nobles,* or the *best sort of musical instruments* (as it doth in one place), I look upon this as the most proper interpretation of it.

[*g*] And among those *principal rules* of life he first commends this, (ver. 22.) not to be injurious to poor people: especially by oppressing them in a form of justice. Which all know was administered by the elders *in the gate* of their city; as may be seen in many more places, besides that which I have noted in the Paraphrase, (Deut. xxi. 19. xxii. 9. xxv. 7. Ruth iv. 1, 2, &c.) Which being so common a notion, it is strange that the Greek interpreters should here understand this verse of *poor people begging at their doors:* whom the wise man admonishes them not to abuse. This seems to be their sense: but the word *tedakke* signifies more than ἀτιμάσῃς, *dishonour,* or *abuse* (which is the word whereby the LXX. express it); for it denotes as much as to *crush,* and that *into bits, i. e.* to undo people utterly; which nobody is inclined to do, unto poor wretches begging at their doors, who are undone already.

[*h*] Then follows a most necessary advice about the choice of a friend, (ver. 24, 25.) upon which the Lord Bacon hath passed this judicious remark: (Advanc. of Learning, book viii. chap. 2. parab. 26.) " By how much the more devoutly the laws of friendship among good men are to be observed; by so much the more it stands upon us to use the caution, even at the very first, in the prudent election of friends. And let the disposition and humours of our friends be what they will, so far as concerns ourselves only, they are by all means to be borne withal: but when they impose a necessity upon us, to behave ourselves just as they would have us towards

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other men, it is a very hard and unreasonable condition of friendship. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as Solomon here admonishes for the preserving of the peace and safety of our life, that we intermingle not our matters with men of a choleric nature; and such as easily provoke or undertake quarrels and debates. For such kind of friends will perpetually engage us in contentions and factions: so that we shall be constrained either to break off friendship, or to be wanting to our own personal safety."

[*i*] In the two next verses (ver. 26, 27.) he seems to warn men against such friendships, as will engage them to be bound for the debts of others. There are several admonitions before against being surety for a *stranger*, (vi. 1. xi. 15.) and in one place (xvii. 18.) he seems to caution against rash engagements, though for a *neighbour* or friend: but especially, he here adds, when a man is conscious to himself that he hath no estate, and doth but deceive him to whom he stands bound for another man's debt: and so, by pretending to be more able than he is, deprives himself of the benefit of that law mentioned Exod. xxii. 26, 27. and repeated Deut. xxiv. 6.

[*k*] What is said in the twenty-eighth verse against the removing of the *boundaries* whereby one man's possessions are distinguished from another's, and that by ancient consent, is applied, by all sorts of writers, as a caution against innovations. And it is a great mistake to imagine, that only popish authors make that use of it: for the best of the protestants have thought fit to accommodate it to the same purpose. And among the rest Melancthon hath very judiciously explained it in this manner: "This precept is not obscure if it be cited allegorically for *not changing the laws, which antiquity by grave authority hath delivered; unless there be an evident necessity*. For this is often repeated among the precepts of political life, not *rashly to change the ancient laws*. And he here quotes a long passage out of Demosthenes against Timocrates, concerning the people of Locri; who ordained that *he who proposed a new law to them, should do it with a halter about his neck*, &c. And if there were such severity now, saith Melancthon, we should not have so many new dogmatists and Lycurguses about wax-candles, and bells, and such-like things; of whose change, as there is no necessity at all, so it would bring no utility. And wise men require us *to pardon and indulge some small inconveniences to custom:* lest by motion, as it is in sick bodies, the commonwealth should suffer a greater evil. It is necessary, indeed, here to add this caution when any doctrine is impious, and the law establishes impious opinions and idols, *then we ought to prefer rules before them, and to obey God rather than man*. But when such amendment is necessary, the boundaries and limits of our fathers are *not taken away, but restored:* because we only return to the doctrine delivered by God to our first father, according to that of Tertullian, *Primum quodque verissimum est. All our care, therefore, herein is to inquire diligently, what is the true antiquity:* for that is a great confirmation of our faith, when we understand the true state of the church in all ages, to follow the testimony of those who retain the foundation."

[*l*] In the last verse Solomon doth not merely commend industry and diligence, as some understand it (taking this to be the same with the Greek proverb, Τύχη ἐν τῷ πόνῳ), but something more, which the Hebrew word *mahir* plainly imports, *viz. speed, swiftness, readiness,* and *cheerfulness*, in the dispatch of business. To which is required a quickness of apprehension in discharging the fittest means, and a dexterity in the application of them: so that the business is not only done, but done speedily, and without much noise and bustle. On such a person, if he can be found, Solomon here makes this remark, that he is likely to come to great preferment. "For there are no qualities (as is observed by the Lord Bacon, book viii. chap. 6. parab. 19.) which princes more respect and require in the choice of a minister, or servant, than celerity and alacrity in the dispatch of business; which are above all the rest, as he shews by this induction. Men of *profound wisdom* are many times suspected by kings as too prying; and able by the strength of their wit as with an engine to turn and wind about their masters, insensibly, whether they will or not. Then *popular persons* are hated, as those that stand in the light of kings, and draw the eyes of the people too much unto themselves. *Men of courage* are commonly taken for turbulent spirits, and more daring than is meet. *Honest men*, who are valuable for their integrity, are thought too stiff; not so pliable as their masters desire to their will and pleasure in every thing. To conclude (saith he) there is not any other good quality, which presents not some shadow, wherewith the mind of kings may be offended: *only quickness of dispatch, in the execution of commands, hath nothing in it that doth not please.* The motions also of the minds of kings are swift, and not very patient of delays. *For they imagine they can do any thing; this only being wanting, that it be done out of hand.* Upon which account, above all other qualities, *celerity* is to them most acceptable."

Ver. 17. *BOW down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.*] And now let me exhort thee again, (iv. 20. v. 1.) whosoever thou art that readest these things, to attend diligently; and consider seriously all the counsels and precepts which wise and good men have delivered: and in particular, let me prevail for an affectionate application of thy mind, to the knowledge which I impart unto thee.

Ver. 18. *For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.*] For it will give thee most high satisfaction if thou dost so heartily entertain them, and thoroughly digest them, and faithfully preserve them in mind; that thou art able withal to produce any of them, as there is occasion, and aptly communicate them for other men's instruction.

Ver. 19. *That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.*] For what greater satisfaction can there be, than to have a good hope in God, and to be well assured of his gracious providence over thee? which is the very end, for which I now declare these things to thee: that if thou hast been negligent before, yet now at length, thou, even thou, mayest know the way to happiness, and shew it unto others.

Ver. 20. *Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge.*] Think of it seriously, and deny, if

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thou canst, that I have taken more ways than one for thy information, and have set down most excellent rules, and those well considered with great exactness and care, for thy conduct both in public and in a private state of life. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 21. *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?*] That thou mightest not only have a certain, firm, and solid knowledge, of all those truths that are necessary for thee, but be able also to give sound advice to those that send to consult thee: and be fit to manage the most difficult affairs, to the satisfaction of them that employ thee in an embassy.

Ver. 22. *Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate.*] And besides those instructions already given, remember these that follow. Never abuse thy power to the spoiling of him, that is in a mean condition, because he is unable to resist thee: but especially do not undo him there, where he hopes for relief, by denying him justice, much less by false accusations, when he comes into the public courts of judgment, (2 Sam. xv. 2.) See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 23. *For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.*] For all causes shall be heard over again, by a higher judge; even the Lord himself, who will do them right: and force their spoilers to pay dearly for the wrong they have done them; for which nothing less than their life shall make satisfaction.

Ver. 24. *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go.*] And as there is nothing more necessary than a friend, so a principal point of wisdom consists in the choice of him; concerning which, observe this rule among others: not to enter into any familiarity with a man prone to anger; and the more furious he is, be so much the more cautious of being drawn along with him, into any company. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 25. *Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*] For it will be a very hard matter to preserve thyself in good temper, when he is out of humour; but thy very kindness to him will make thee feel the same commotion: nay, bring thy very life into great danger, by being engaged in all his quarrels.

Ver. 26. *Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.*] And do not keep company with those who are forward to pass their word, and give security, for the payment of other men's debts; lest they draw thee into such dangerous engagements, (vi. 1. xi. 15.) especially when thou hast no estate to answer the debt for which thou art bound. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 27. *If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?*] For it will highly incense the creditor when he falls upon thee, to find thou art not so able a man as thou madest a show of to him, and so provoke him to pull away the very bed from under thee, when thou art in it; and leave thee shamefully and wretchedly on the ground: for why should any man have so little care of his own good, as thus to expose himself to such miserable straits for the sake of another?

Ver. 28. *Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.*] Be content with thy own estate, and do not seek to enlarge it by invading other men's possessions: especially those to which they have an unquestionable right, having enjoyed them by long prescription, and by the consent of thy forefathers, whose constitutions ought to be had in great veneration. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 29. *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.*] Mark a man that is not rash, but yet quick and dexterous in the dispatch of any business he is charged withal: and thou mayest foretell that he shall not long continue obscure, in some private and mean family; but be taken notice of, and preferred to the service of his prince, in some public ministry.

CHAP. XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] As the foregoing chapter concludes with an observation concerning the quality of a person who is most likely to come to preferment, so this begins with a caution to him, when he is promoted to it. For the first verse is (as Melancthon calls it) *Aulica admonitio*, an admonition to a courtier; remembering him, that there is danger, even in the favour, especially in the familiarity, of princes and great men. Whose kindness must be used with so much modesty and circumspection: especially if they be so extraordinarily kind, as to admit an inferior to eat with them: when, if a man use not great moderation, he loses the guard he ought to have upon himself. For his head growing hot, his tongue may run (as we say) before his wit; his behaviour may be indecent, or too negligent, &c. and therefore Solomon advises such a person to be very considerate at that time, above all others; and with earnest attention to mind both *who* and *what* is before him (for the Hebrew words may refer to both, as I have explained in the Paraphrase): there being great danger of his ruin, if he give any offence at such a time; when the passions of the prince or ruler are apt to be as disordered as his own: and therefore had need be watched, that he may know how to appease them presently; and so govern himself as to receive no prejudice thereby.

[*b*] But especially he must be sure to have a command over his tongue, (which Melancthon takes to be the meaning of *putting a knife to his throat*, ver. 2.) that it take not too much liberty, and that he speak nothing rashly; which may undo him, as it did Clytus; whom Alexander slew at a feast, for contradicting him too freely. He cites many admonitions out of the poets concerning this danger; concluding with that counsel which Æsop gave Solon, when he was going to Crœsus; Speak to a king, *ἢ ὡς ἥκιστα, ἢ ὡς ἥδιστα, either as little, or as sweet, as is possible.*

But this is too narrow a sense of that phrase, *put a knife to thy throat*; though it be a part of it. For it expresses the exceeding great caution a man should use at a feast, lest he exceed his bounds in eating and drinking: wherein he should be as careful as he is of cutting his throat; which many have in effect done by intemperance; whereby some have utterly destroyed their healths at last; and others fallen into such a liberty of speech, as hath on a sudden cost them their lives. Be as afraid, therefore, saith the wise man, of running into excess (of which thou art in great danger at a great table, if thou hast a great stomach), as if thy knife, wherewith thou cuttest thy meat,

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would certainly cut thy throat, if thou eatest too much. In short, he advises a man to affright himself from intemperance, where is a great temptation to it.

There are those, indeed, that take the first particle *ve*, in the beginning of the verse, to signify as much as *otherwise;* and the meaning to be, If thou dost not curb thy appetite, but let loose its reins to eat and drink as much as it desireth, it will expose thee to as certain danger, as if a knife were at thy throat: which, though it be not so easy a construction, I have not altogether neglected.

[c] After this follows an admonition against *covetousness*, ver. 4. where he neither forbids all labour, nor a provident care (which in other places he commends), but only represents how vain it is to be over solicitous; and to leave no thoughts nor strength for any thing else: for so the first word is, do not *weary thyself* to be rich. And in the next part of the sentence, he only bids us *desist from* our own understanding; meaning thereby, either we should not wholly trust to that, though in the use of honest means; or that we should not follow our own inventions, contrary to the Divine direction. Some would have the meaning of the whole to be this; Do not prefer the getting of riches before the getting of wisdom: taking the verse as if it ran thus; *labour not for riches so as to cease from the prosecution of wisdom;* let not thy worldly cares hinder better things, and then there is no danger: which is an excellent sense, if the words would bear it.

[d] The reason which Solomon adds, (ver. 5.) hath little or no difficulty in it; which is from the uncertainty, either of getting or of keeping riches. Whose inconstancy he sets forth by the flight of an *eagle:* which of all other birds is observed to fly swiftest, and highest into heaven (as Solomon here speaks), or into the clouds (as other authors); that is, quite out of sight. Whence it is that God saying, he carried the Israelites out of Egypt *upon eagles' wings*, Exod. xix. 4. R. Solomon (upon Exod. xii. 37.) took a conceit that they went a hundred and twenty miles in one hour; for so far it was from Rameses to Succoth. Which though it be but an idle fancy, yet there was this foundation for it; that the Scripture expresses the swiftest motion by that of the *eagles*. So Saul and Jonathan, who were strong and excellent racers, pursuing the enemies with great speed, are said to have been *swifter than eagles*, (2 Sam. i. 23.) And such were they who pursued Zedekiah and the people of Judah, when they fled out of Jerusalem in hope to make an escape, (Lam. iv. 19. Hab. i. 8. compared with 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5.) And thus other nations represent it, as Bochartus observes out of Cicero, who tells us out of Chrysippus, that when a racer dreamed he was turned into an *eagle*, an interpreter told him, "Vicisti, istâ enim ave volat nulla velocius."

[e] Next to covetousness he condemns envy, as Melancthon and others understand ver. 6, &c. or rather such covetousness, as makes men sordid: whence arises, indeed, that part of *envy*, which disposes a man to grudge every thing to his neighbour, though he would be thought liberal: which I pass by only with this note, of that good man; That a singular diligence ought to be used, in observing and finding out the dispositions and inclinations of others; that we may know whom to avoid, and whom to consort withal. And (according as he understands the beginning of the next verse, ver. 7.) there is none worse than the man now mentioned, who hath a *spectre* or *satyr* in his soul; so he renders it, mistaking *schaar* for *saar:* which are widely different. And this word *schaar* being used only here in this place, hath raised a great deal of difficulty, whence to derive it: which I shall not trouble the reader withal; the sense being well enough expressed in our translation, and in short is this, *he is not what he seems:* his thoughts differ much from his words; and therefore do not believe what he saith, but mark the discovery he makes of his inward thoughts, which are so sordid that he is *detestable*, as some render the phrase, or *stinkingly base.*

[f] Of *envy* at the prosperous estate of wicked men, which makes others wish themselves in their condition, though it be by imitating their wickedness, he speaks afterward, ver. 17. From whence, to the twenty-fifth chapter, most of the precepts are admonitions proper for parents to give their children; that they may know what to eschew: particularly *drunkenness* and *whoredom* (of which he speaks in this chapter), and such *company* as may entice them to be so lewdly wicked. And, in order hereunto, to implant in their minds a *due esteem of wisdom*, as infinitely to be preferred before all earthly treasures. This he inserts in the middle, between the cautions against *drunkenness* and *whoredom*, [g] ver. 23. upon which the Lord Bacon hath passed this remark, that the wise man judged it reasonable, that "riches should be employed to get learning, and not learning be applied to gather up riches."

[h] St. Chrysostom's observation concerning a harlot (Hom. xiv. ad pop. Antioch.) most excellently explains ver. 27, 28. that "πορνὴ φιλεῖν οὐκ ἐπίσταται, ἀλλὰ ἐπιβουλεύει μόνον, *a whore understands nothing of love or friendship, but only of the art of inveigling.* Her heart is never sensible of true affection; but is made up of wiles to deceive and entrap men unto their undoing. And if the danger do not appear, she is the more to be avoided, ὅτι περιέσταλε τὸν ὄλεθρον, &c. *because she covers the destruction*, and hides the death; and takes care it shall not presently come into the sight of him, whom she ensnares into it."

[i] In the conclusion of the chapter he resumes his discourse about *drunkenness;* and represents at large the dismal effects of it, in so lively a manner, as may well deter any man that reads it seriously from being too busy with wine: which he saith, in conclusion, *bites like a serpent, and stings like a basilisk* (so Bochartus hath proved we ought to translate the word *tziphoni*, which we render *adder):* whence it was, that Tatianus, the Encratites, and Manichees, called wine *the gall of the dragon, and the venom of the old serpent:* and would not taste a drop of it, no, not in the holy communion. Not considering, what lies open and obvious to every body's eyes, that there is no hurt in the thing itself (which is a singular Divine benefit), but in our excess. Whereby innumerable diseases are bred in the body, the reason for the present suffocated, and the most absurd affections stirred up: which change men for the time into beasts: Some into *lions*, as Bochartus glosses: (lib. iii. cap. 10. par. ii.) witness Alexander, who killed his dearest friend in his cups; and Herod, who, after a feast, condemned the great servant of God, John Baptist (whom he himself

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highly reverenced), to be beheaded: others into *dogs;* as Nabal, who most rudely and churlishly barked at David, to whom he had great obligations, when he was in drink: others into *hogs,* wallowing in filthy pleasures; as Lot, who defiled himself with incest, when he was not himself: nay, it throws men down below the beasts, who drink no more than needs, and never excite their thirst by art, but only follow the directions of nature. All which, if any man consider, he will easily allow of what Solomon says, that it *bites like a serpent,* &c. that is, doth more mischief than can be repaired. For the wound which the basilisk gives is said, by Avicenna, to be incurable; and the writers of his nation say, it doth hurt even by its *looks* and *hissing,* as that author beforenamed relates, cap. 9. And so Solomon immediately represents the effects of drunkenness to be such, that they make a man senseless, and perfectly stupid; and consequently incorrigible, though he suffer never so sadly by it, (ver. 34, 35.) As if this poison made a mortification in the whole man; for which there is no remedy.

Ver. 1. *WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee.*] When a prince, or a very great person, doth thee the honour to admit thee to his table, be not transported with such vain joy, as to remit the seriousness of thy mind: but remember thou art in danger, if thou hast not thy wits about thee to direct thy behaviour; lest thou touch any thing, which, perhaps, was reserved only for the prince's own eating, or demean thyself indecently towards him or towards any of the guests or waiters at the table. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*] Especially lest thou speak too freely, which may hazard thy undoing; for the prevention of which keep thy mind as sharp as thine appetite; and affright thyself from intemperance in language, as well as in eating: of which there is the greater danger, if thou hast a greedy desire of meat and drink. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Be not desirous of his dainties; for they are deceitful meat.*] Most especially when exquisite delicacies are set before thee; which are so tempting, that it is a piece of wisdom not to be too forward to accept of such invitations; or being there to content thyself with the plainest dish: for it was not kindness, but design, perhaps, which called thee thither; or thou mayest be easily enticed by such dainties to overeat thyself.

Ver. 4. *Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.*] Do not trouble thyself with restless and tiresome labours to get a great estate; be not too thoughtful, nor let thy cares be endless about such matters; much less use any ill contrivances which they may suggest to thee; no, nor depend so much upon thy own prudent management for the success of thy honest undertakings, as upon God's blessings. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they flee like an eagle towards heaven.*] Consider, for the cure of this, how ridiculous it is, that thou shouldest let thy mind be so intent upon riches, and pursue them with such haste and earnestness which, perhaps, thou canst never catch; or, if thou dost, may be gone as fast as they came; and by all thy care and pains never be recovered. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 6. *Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats.*] Receive no obligations from a sordid man: but though he invite thee to a feast (which he may perhaps make sometimes for ostentation's sake), let not the good cheer tempt thee to accept his invitation. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 7. *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*] For, even then, when he would be thought most free and generous, he is not able to dissemble the baseness of his mind; which expresses itself in his very looks; whereby he shews that when he prays thee to feed heartily, he had rather thou wouldest let it alone, and thinks thou eatest and drinkest a great deal too much.

Ver. 8. *The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.*] Which will make thee so nauseate, as to be ready to bring up again every bit thou hast eaten: and to repent of the commendations thou hast bestowed on his entertainment; or the thanks thou hast returned to him for it; or the wholesome discourse thou hast interspersed at the table; for it is all perfectly lost upon him.

Ver. 9. *Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.*] And, indeed, it is good advice, not to speak of any serious thing to such stupid fools; for be thy discourse never so ingenious, prudent, or instructive, they will not only reap no profit by it, but despise, and, perhaps, laugh at it.

Ver. 10. *Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless.*] What was said before (xxii. 28.) of not removing the ancient boundaries, understand with a peculiar respect to fatherless children: whose possessions be not tempted to invade, because they are in their infancy, and do not understand the wrong that is done them: or are utterly unable to defend or to right themselves.

Ver. 11. *For their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.*] For, if their guardians and friends be careless of their concerns, or afraid to oppose thy proceedings, they have a Protector, who neither wants power nor courage to recover their right: and will undoubtedly assert it, and condemn thee to make them ample satisfaction, (xxii. 23.)

Ver. 12. *Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.*] And do not think these to be slight admonitions, which need not much to be regarded, but apply thy mind with sincere affection to such instructions, and listen diligently to those persons whose discourses tend to make thee understand thy duty.

Ver. 13. *Withhold not correction from thy child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.*] Unto which children sometimes will not attend, and therefore remember what hath been often said, (xiii. 24. xix. 18. xxii. 15.) and do not forbear to give correction to a child that is so ill-disposed: let not foolish pity make thee spare him; for it will do him no hurt if he be soundly beaten; but rather be a means to save him from sorer punishment, even from death itself.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.*] Do not turn over this business to another, but do it thyself; which may save the public officers the labour: nay, by making his body smart for his

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faults, both body and soul may be delivered from utter destruction.

Ver. 15. *My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*] But mix the kindest exhortations and entreaties with this discipline, saying: My dear child, if thou hast any love for me, who was the instrument of bringing thee into the world, be serious, and heartily in love with wisdom and goodness, which will give me, me, I say (not to mention now thy own happiness), a joy incomparably greater than all other.

Ver. 16. *Yea, my reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things.*] A joy that may be better felt than expressed; diffusing itself all over me; and making my mind triumph, when I hear no ill words come out of thy mouth; but only discourses of the right way to be happy.

Ver. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*] In which, that thou mayest always tread, be not offended at the prosperity of the wicked; much less vex and fret thyself into an imitation of them; but maintain perpetually an awful sense of God in thy mind; which is the best preservative against envy, and all other sins, if thou perseverest constantly in it. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 18. *For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.*] Which there is great reason thou shouldest; for be assured, though thou art afflicted for the present, the time will come when thou shalt not only be delivered, but rewarded for thy patience: expect it confidently, if the fear of the Lord make thee persist in faithful obedience to him: for it shall not be in the power of man to disappoint thee of thy hope; but thou shalt certainly flourish, when those wicked men shall hang down their heads and perish.

Ver. 19. *Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.*] And more particularly, my dear child, be advised by me to study this piece of wisdom; and to follow closely and heartily this direction which I commend to thee.

Ver. 20. *Be not amongst wine-bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh.*] I know how greedy youth is of pleasure; and in what danger to be corrupted by it: therefore avoid the society of drunkards and gluttons; and take heed of all excess in eating and drinking.

Ver. 21. *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.*] For besides that it is an enemy to wisdom, it brings men to poverty; which is the common effect of revelling, feasting, and riotous living: for that is wont to be attended also with laziness, carelessness, and neglect of all business; which necessarily reduces men to extreme beggary.

Ver. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.*] Be obedient to this counsel, which is given thee by thy father, who loves thee, and hath had longer experience of the world than thou, and by bringing thee into it hath power to command thee: and do not slight (as the manner is) what thy mother saith, because she is a woman, much less because she is grown old; which ought to make her advice the more regarded by thee.

Ver. 23. *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*] Spare no cost nor pains to acquire the knowledge of what is true and false, good and bad; and do not think there is any thing of equal price unto it: and therefore neglect not the study of it, though it were to get never so much money, or the highest honours; but prefer wisdom and virtue, and the means that instruct thee how to attain them, and to make thee able to do good to others, infinitely before them all. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 24. *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a wise child, shall have joy of him.*] For there is no greater joy a parent can have, than to see his son take virtuous courses: which as it is the only wisdom, so gives both parents and children the highest pleasure and satisfaction.

Ver. 25. *Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*] Let not thy father and mother, then, want this singular pleasure; but by thy well-doing fill the heart of her that bare thee with joy and triumph: who, for all the pains and care she hath had in thy birth and about thy education, desires no other requital but only this.

Ver. 26. *My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.*] And more especially, my dear child, let me prevail with thee also to apply thy mind affectionately to this following instruction: and let thy thoughts be very intent and fixed upon it; that thou mayest preserve thyself in the practice of those virtues to which I have directed thee.

Ver. 27. *For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.*] Estrange thyself from harlots, as much as they are estranged from God; for (as I have told thee before, xxii. 14.) thou art utterly undone, if thou fallest in league with a whore; who will never be satisfied with all the money thou canst give her: and yet, such are her arts, notwithstanding all the straits and hardships thou shalt suffer by her, it will be a hard matter, when thou art once engaged, to get quit of her.

Ver. 28. *She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.*] She is not what she appears; but, whatsoever love she may pretend to thee, is no better than a highway-robber; who will watch all opportunities to make a prey of thee: and is of no other use in the world, which already is too bad, but to make it worse, by increasing the number of lewd, disloyal, and faithless men. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 29. *Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?*] And if thou intendest to avoid such women, then (as I said before, ver. 20.) avoid intemperance; the lamentable effects of which are so many, that it is a hard matter to enumerate them: for if thou considerest who they are that run themselves into all manner of mischiefs, that are never out of danger, but are engaged, for instance, in quarrels, disturbing the neighbourhood by their noise and tumult, and fighting; and are wounded, not for the safety of their country, but for frivolous causes; look deformedly, and spoil their very countenances:

Ver. 30. *They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine.*] Thou wilt find they are such as are so in love with wine, that they neither willingly stir from it, nor content themselves with the ordinary sort; but make a diligent search for the richest and most generous liquors.

Ver. 31. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself*

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aright.] Therefore do not believe thy senses merely, but consider the power and effects of wine: and when thou seest how bright it looks, and how it sparkles in the glass; when it tastes most gratefully, and goes down smoothly: let it not entice thee to excess.

Ver. 32. *At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*] But remember, that the pleasure will be attended at last with intolerable pains; when it works like so much poison in the veins; and casts thee into diseases as hard to cure, as the biting of a serpent or the stinging of a basilisk. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 33. *Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.*] Thy thoughts will not only grow confused, and all things appear to thee otherways than they are; but lustful, nay, adulterous desires will be stirred up, which thou canst not rule; and thy mouth, being without a bridle, will break forth into unseemly, nay filthy, scurrilous, or, perhaps, blasphemous language; without respect to God or man.

Ver. 34. *Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.*] And, which is worst of all, thou wilt grow so perfectly senseless, that thy most important business will not only lie neglected; but thou wilt sottishly run thyself into the extremest hazards, without any apprehension of danger: being no more able to direct thy course, than a pilot who snorts when a ship is tossed in the midst of the sea; or to take notice of the peril thou art in, than he that falls asleep on the top of the mast, where he was set to keep the watch.

Ver. 35. *They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*] And to complete thy misery, shouldest thou be not only mocked and abused, but beaten also, thou thyself wilt confess, afterward, that it made no impression on thee: nay, shouldest thou be most lamentably battered and bruised, thou wilt neither know who did it, nor at all regard it; but, as if no harm had befallen thee, no sooner open thy eyes, but stupidly seek an occasion to be drunk, and beaten again.

CHAP. XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] The proneness of good men, especially while they are weak, and only in the beginnings of goodness, to be dejected at the prosperity of the ungodly, and so to be tempted to imitate them, is the reason, that the admonition we meet withal in the first verse is so often repeated. Which we find before, (iii. 31. xxiii. 17.) and comes again ver. 18. of this chapter.

[*b*] And, in like manner, for the encouragement of well-disposed persons, to depend on God's blessing, in the exercise of a virtuous prudence; for the getting, increasing, and preserving an estate, (ver. 3—5.) he repeats another observation (ver. 6, 7.) of the advantage which wisdom hath over mere strength: which we had several times before, (xi. 14. xv. 22. xx. 18.)

[*c*] And then having shewn that it is not wisdom to invent new ways of doing hurt, (ver. 8, 9.) he advises to diligence in the acquiring of true wisdom, while we are in a good condition: for else we shall not be able to support ourselves when adversity comes. So some understand ver. 10. which we translate otherways, and so do most interpreters: and therefore I have expressed the sense of our translation first; and only annexed the other to it. There is a third, which I have taken no notice of in my Paraphrase, because it doth not seem to me to be genuine; which is this, *If adversity deject thee, and break thy spirit; thou wilt be so much the more unable to get out of it.* But it is an excellent observation, and therefore I thought good here to mention it: though the simplest sense seems to be that which we follow, and in brief is this: *Thou art not a man of courage, if thou canst not bear adversity with an equal mind.*

[*d*] And there is a courage to be exercised in our charitable succouring of others, as well as in our own distresses; which he commends in the following words, ver. 11, 12. where he presses, with a great deal of warmth (as will appear to those that understand the Hebrew language, and read the last words with an interrogation), the necessity of giving our assistance for the rescuing of innocent persons (when their lives are in danger), either by counselling them, or petitioning others in their behalf, or purchasing their release with money, or using our authority, or power (if we have any and can do it lawfully), for their deliverance. For this chiefly belongs to magistrates, and those that are in public offices; who ought not to be overawed by great men, from undertaking the protection and relief of those who are unjustly oppressed. This, I think, Melancthon has expressed, as well or better than any I have met withal, in this manner: "God commands both the magistrates and private men not to murder the innocent, and likewise not to assist unjust cruelty. But quite contrary, the magistrate ought to be the guardian of innocent men's lives; and private persons in their places ought to oppose, without sedition, unjust severity, as much as they are able. There are many examples of this in the Scripture. Jonathan opposed his father and helped to preserve David; not only by the good testimony he gave of him, but by other good offices. Obadiah fed the prophets whom Jezebel designed to have killed. The eunuch pulled up Jeremiah out of the dungeon; and the Egyptian midwives saved the Israelites' children, as Rahab afterward did the spies. In the time of Dioclesian, a noble person in the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, publicly tore down the edict of the emperor for putting Christians to death, that he might shew he detested that unjust cruelty. Examples to the contrary, are such as that of Doeg, who, in compliance with Saul's fury, slew the innocent priests: and many now either openly or by their silence confirm the unjust severity, which is exercised against our churches. Let such think of these words of Solomon, *If thou forbear to deliver them,*" &c.

[*e*] Who shews with what pleasure such instructions should be received, and how profitable, nay, necessary, they are, by the example of *honey,* (ver. 13, 14.) which was not only reckoned the sweetest thing in those countries (as appears by many places of Scripture), but one of those which was most necessary for human life; as appears by the words of the son of Sirach, (xxxix. 41.) For it was useful for food, for drink, for medicine, for preserving of dead bodies; and was so natural to them,

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that it seems to have been the food of infants, (Isa. vii. 15.) Whence the ancient Christians were wont to give a little *milk* and *honey* to those who were baptized; as persons newly regenerate and born again: because *honey*, as well as *milk*, was the nutriment of little children in those days and countries. How refreshing it was, appears by the story of Jonathan; (1 Sam. xiv. 17.) and in what common use, by the example of our Saviour after his resurrection, (Luke xxiv. 41, 42.) Which may all be applied to wisdom; from whence the mind derives the greatest satisfaction: and therefore ought to be, as it were, our daily diet (without which we cannot subsist), from the beginning of our days unto the end of them.

[*f*] For many gracious promises are made to it which must not be so understood, he shews, as if no evil thing should befal good men: but as wisdom teaches them to be content with a little, (which seems to be denoted by the word we translate *habitation*, ver. 15.) so, when they meet with any affliction, it instructs them not to despair of better days. So those words are to be understood, ver. 16. which are commonly not only in *sermons*, but in *books* also, applied to falling into sin: and that men may the more securely indulge themselves in their sins, and yet think themselves good men, they have very cunningly added something to them. For they are commonly cited thus, *A just man falleth seven times a day*, which last words [*a day*, or *in a day*] are not in any translation of the Bible (much less in the original), but only in some corrupt editions of the Vulgar Latin: which, against the plain scope of the context, and meaning of the words, seems to understand this place of falling into sin. When the word *fall* never signifies so; but always *trouble* and calamity: as abundance of learned men have long ago observed; particularly Tarnovius, and, since him, Amama and Grotius. Nor needs there any other proof of it, than those places (which are many) wherein *falling* and *rising again* being opposed, both of them have respect to *calamities:* and the former signifies, *being plunged into them*, and the other *getting out of them*. And so, in the Latin tongue, adversities are called *casus*, *falls*, as every body knows.

And therefore we must make use of other places, for the confuting the fancy of perfection in this life; and for the comfort of those who are cast down by their lapses into sin: and take heed of reading the Holy Scriptures so carelessly, as to turn our medicine into poison: which is the fault of those who, from such mistakes, give way to their evil affections, and let them carry them into sin.

[*g*] Against this there follows a severe caution, in the wise man, who would not have us so much as indulge ourselves in that pleasure we are apt to take, in seeing our enemies fall into such troubles as they have given us, (ver. 17.) And to this he annexes another, which cannot be too often repeated, (ver. 19.) against fretting at the prosperity of those who do ill: which he often prohibits; but doth it now in the words of his father David, (Psal. xxxvii. 1.) whose authority was justly held very great in that church: and who had made many observations, from his own experience, of the shortness of their felicity, and the sudden changes with which they were often surprised and astonished.

[*h*] An instance he gives of this in the next precept, (ver. 21, 22.) which, saith Melancthon (so careful were the reformers to prevent all *sedition* and *rebellion*), is to be reckoned among the principal sentences that are to be observed in this book; commanding obedience, and directing the order of it. "For, first, he commands us to obey God, and then the king: whose office it is to see the laws of God observed by his subjects; and to make such laws as are not repugnant to God's laws; and to punish the contumacious; and to pronounce all sentences according to the laws, &c. And *in dubious cases their decrees ought to prevail;* not only because there is a probable reason on their side, but because of the authority given from above unto magistrates: whom God would have us in civil affairs, though dubious before, to obey. And because God gives us sometimes more mild and gentle, sometimes less kind, he would have us also to bear *onera duriora*, if they be tolerable, and obedience be not a sin. For he threatens here a severe vengeance to those that are *seditious:* so he translates the word *schonim;* which the Chaldee translates *fools (changelings* in our language): for they are no better who invert and *change* this order (as some understand the word), either by advancing the will of the prince above all law, without any regard to what God himself hath enacted; or by pretending religion and the fear of the Lord for rebellion against the king, who ordains nothing against God's law."

[*i*] But there is no necessity of glossing upon that word (which we render *given to change*), for though it be diversely translated, the sense is still the same. And some of the varieties that are of opinions, about the sense of the latter part of the twenty-second verse, I have expressed in the Paraphrase, and made them agree well enough. Lud. de Dieu is alone by himself (as far as I can find), who would have that word we render *both of them* to signify *their years:* and the meaning to be, *who knows how soon their life may be at a miserable end?*

Among the following sentences, which are rules also of wisdom, there is no difficulty; but a little in ver. 26. 28. where I have endeavoured to comprehend several expositions, and connect them together in my Paraphrase: but think not fit to enlarge this preface any farther, by giving a particular account of them.

Ver. 1. *BE thou not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.*] Let it not vex thee into impatience and indignation to see men thrive, who are bent upon nothing but wickedness; much less move thee to think them happy, and to wish thyself among them: but avoid their company, and much more their course of life. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.*] For who would grow rich and great by the misery of others? and such men's thoughts are always contriving how to ruin those who stand in the way of their wicked designs; and their tongues are employed in lies, calumnies, false accusations, and all manner of forgeries; not only to give trouble and vexation unto their neighbours, but to undo them.

Ver. 3. *Through wisdom is a house builded, and by understanding it is established.*] An estate may be gotten, and a family raised, by such wise and pious means as are recom-

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mended in this book; and there need no other arts but virtue and prudent management to settle and continue it.

Ver. 4. *And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*] For as true learning and knowledge is the best furniture of the mind; so it is the best able to furnish every room in the house; not only with all things necessary, but with what may serve for ornament and for the pleasure of life.

Ver. 5. *A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.*] Wisdom also is able to supply the defect of bodily strength, for a man's defence against unjust invaders of his possessions: or if he have outward strength and power, his skill and dexterity will add such force unto it, as will make it more effectual.

Ver. 6. *For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.*] For experience tells us, that victory doth not depend so much upon mighty armies, as upon exact conduct, good discipline, subtle contrivance: and the safety of a nation doth not lie merely in the multitude of the people; but in the number of wise men, to direct and govern all affairs, (xi. 14.) See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 7. *Wisdom is too high for a fool; he openeth not his mouth in the gate.*] Who are the more valuable, because it is no easy thing to be an accomplished person in all the parts of wisdom; which are above the reach of vain, rash, and heady men, who are not admitted either to judge, or to advise in the common council of the city, where wise men are not afraid nor ashamed to speak, and that with great authority.

Ver. 8. *He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.*] He that deviseth new ways and arts of cheating, or doing mischief unto others, is one of the worst of men; and shall be branded with the odious name of *an inventor of evil things,* (Rom. i. 30.)

Ver. 9. *The thought of foolishness is sin; and the scorner is an abomination to men.*] To contrive any thing that is hurtful unto others, though out of rashness and folly, is a sin: but he that makes a jest of it when it is done, and laughs at those who tell him it is a sin, is such a pestilent wretch, that he is, or ought to be, extremely abhorred of all mankind.

Ver. 10. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.*] To despond and desist from any good design, much more to despair of deliverance, when thou fallest into any distress, is an argument of great weakness and feebleness of mind: and yet, if thou art remiss in the study of wisdom in a prosperous condition, thy spirit will be apt to sink, and be dejected, in a worse. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain.*] Use thy best endeavours to deliver innocent persons, who, by false accusations, or other ways, are dragged to execution; or are in present danger of losing their life: and do not think thou canst with a safe conscience withdraw thyself from succouring them in that distress.

Ver. 12. *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*] I know the common excuse which men are apt to make in this case; protesting that they did not understand their innocence, or how to save them: but dost thou think such things will pass with God, though they do with men? Canst thou deceive him with false pretences? Him, that searcheth into the secrets of all men's hearts? Him, that observeth every, the very least, motion of thy soul? by whose wise providence, which serves all men in their kind, thou thyself shalt be deserted, as thou hast deserted others. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 13. *My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honey-comb, which is sweet to thy taste.*] Do not slight, much less nauseate, such precepts as these, my dear child: but, as honey is most acceptable to thy palate, both for its wholesomeness and for its pleasure; especially that pure part of it, which drops of itself immediately from the honey-comb: See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 14. *So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.*] So let that knowledge be to thy mind, which tends to make thee wise and virtuous: for as nothing is more necessary for thee, nothing more delightful; so, if it be seriously studied and thoroughly digested, it will abundantly reward thy pains, with prosperous success in all thy undertakings; and never put thee in hope of any thing, which shall not answer thy expectation.

Ver. 15. *Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting-place.*] It is possible, indeed, that a good man's condition may be very mean, nay, afflicted sometime in this world: but let not that tempt the wicked subtly to contrive to ruin, much less by open violence to disturb his innocent repose; nay, cast him out of his small habitation, with which he is contented:

Ver. 16. *For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.*] For though a good man should meet with so many troubles, that thou imaginest he cannot fail to perish in them; he shall overcome them all, and flourish again: when the wicked shall sink under the calamity that befals them, and never be able to recover out of it. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 17. *Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth; and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.*] It is a great piece of wisdom and virtue also, to pity others in their trouble, and not to shew any sign of joy and mirth, when thou seest any man, though he be thy enemy, in a calamitous condition: no, not so much as (upon thy own account) to take any inward pleasure in his downfall.

Ver. 18. *Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and turn away his wrath from him.*] For though nobody sees it, God doth; and such inhuman affections are so displeasing to him, that they may provoke him to translate the calamity from thy enemy unto thee: and thereby damp thy sinful joy with a double sorrow; first to see him delivered from his trouble, and then to find thyself involved in it.

Ver. 19. *Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked.*] Let not thy anger kindle (or if it do, quench it presently, that it may not tempt thee to impatience) when thou seest men thrive and prosper: and do not imagine them to be happy men, and thereby be provoked to follow them in their impious courses. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 20. *For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.*] For though a wicked man may live bravely for a time, yet it shall end

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quite otherwise than he expected: and his splendour (such as it is), if not in his own days, yet in his posterity, be utterly extinguished.

Ver. 21. *My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change.*] Take care therefore, my dear child, that thy religion (which teaches thee in the first place to worship, reverence, and obey the great Lord and Governor of all the world) make thee humbly obedient to the king, as God's vicegerent here on earth: and have nothing to do with those, whose discontent with the present state of things, or their love of novelty, makes them effect a change of government; and depart from their duty both to God and man. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 22. *For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?*] For an unexpected and dreadful calamity shall unavoidably and violently seize on them: but when and how either God or the king will punish them none can tell; or what terrible vengeance they will take, both upon those that move rebellion, and those that associate with them. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 23. *These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect to persons in judgment.*] These things also that follow, belong to the wise and virtuous conduct of thy life. It is a very evil thing, if thou art a judge to consider the quality of the person, (either his greatness, or his relation, or the friendship thou hast with him, &c.) and not the merits of the cause, that is brought before thee.

Ver. 24. *He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.*] And whoever he be, that contrary to the plain evidence which is given in against the wicked shall pronounce him innocent, and make a bad cause to be good, the whole country shall curse him, and wish the Divine vengeance shall overtake him: nay, other nations, who hear of his unjust proceedings, shall have him in great detestation.

Ver. 25. *But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.*] But they that give a check to vice and wickedness, by punishing evildoers according to their deserts, shall not only have inward satisfaction in their own mind; but increase of joy, by hearing others speak well of them: nay, God himself, the fountain of all good, shall plentifully bestow his blessings upon them.

Ver. 26. *Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*] It is not only justice but kindness, to pass a righteous sentence, without fear or favour; and upon all occasions to speak appositely and consonant to truth: and as such persons give others a singular pleasure, so they shall be beloved most dearly, and honoured by all.

Ver. 27. *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterward build thine house.*] Do every thing in order: and first mind those things which are most necessary; contenting thyself with a little hut in the field till thou hast gotten an estate, by a careful improvement of thy pasturage and of thy tillage: and then it will be timely enough to build thee a house, and to bring a wife into it.

Ver. 28. *Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.*] Do not testify any thing against thy neighbour rashly, much less when thou hast no ground at all for the accusation; nor seduce any body into a false opinion of him, by crafty insinuation; much less suborn them secretly by promises of rewards, to say that which is not true of him; when outwardly thou carriest thyself to him, and pretendest to be his friend.

Ver. 29. *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.*] Suppose he hath been injurious in that kind to thee heretofore, and thou hast now an opportunity to be revenged; let not that tempt thee to resolve with thyself to do to him as he hath done to thee: taking upon thee that, which God hath declared belongs to himself alone, (Deut. xxxii. 35.) to recompense upon him according to his deservings.

Ver. 30. *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding.*] And, to that which I have just now said (ver. 27.) concerning diligence, I will add this observation; which I myself made, as I took a view of the state of my subjects, among whom I found one so lazy and void of consideration; that, though he had good land in the field, and a fruitful vineyard,

Ver. 31. *And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was broken down.*] Yet, such was his wretched sloth, instead of corn I was surprised with the sight of thorns and thistles, which had overrun his whole field; nor was there any thing but nettles to be seen in his vineyard: or if there had been any fruit in either, it would have been lost for want of a fence; which was fallen down, and laid all open to the beasts of prey.

Ver. 32. *Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it, and received instruction.*] Which rueful spectacle so deeply affected my heart, and brought so many thoughts into my mind, that I learnt, by beholding those miserable effects of idleness, to cure that vice in myself, and to correct it in others.

Ver. 33. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.*] And I cannot do it better, than in those words before used, (vi .10, 11.) If thou wilt not rouse up thyself, O sluggard, but, rolling thyself on thy bed, ridiculously desire thy pains may be spared, and that thou mayest still be suffered without any disturbance to enjoy a little more sleep, and to lay aside all care of thy business, when thou hast loitered too long already:

Ver. 34. *So shall thy poverty come, as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.*] Then poverty shall come swiftly (though in silent and unobserved paces) upon thee; and, before thou art aware, leave thee as naked, as if thou wert stripped by a highwayman: nay, the most extreme want and beggary shall unavoidably seize on thee, like an armed man, against whom thou canst make no resistance.

PART III.

CHAP. XXV.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] Here begins the third part of the book of Proverbs; which is a collection made by some belonging to Hezekiah: and acknowledged here (in the entrance of the book), as well as the former, to be Solomon's. Who

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spake a great many proverbs; (we read 1 Kings iv. 32.) which, no doubt, were preserved by his successors in a book, if he did not set them down there himself. Out of which volume, some good men had selected such as they thought most useful for the people: and besides those in the foregoing chapters, which had been compiled, either in his own days, or soon after; these also which follow were thought good to be added in the days of Hezekiah: who, restoring the service of God in the temple to its purity and splendour, (2 Chron. xxix. 3, &c. xxxi. 2, 3, &c.) took care in all likelihood, for the better instruction of the people in piety, to revive the *schools of the prophets* also: and to press them (as he had done the priests) to do their duty faithfully; in teaching the laws of God, and informing the people in all things that might be profitable for them.

Out of which schools some were chosen, it is probable, to attend the king himself; who are called his *men* or *servants:* who, out of their great zeal to promote useful learning, culled out more proverbs from among that great heap of three thousand (which would have been too great a bulk to have been all published, and, perhaps, all of them not concerning manners or good government), and such especially as they saw would do good to the prince as well as to the people; of which nature are those that are put into this collection; many of which belong to the right administration of the public affairs. I am not able to produce express authority for all this; but I think it may be fairly conjectured from those words, 2 Chron. xxxi. *ult.* where we read of the pains Hezekiah took about the law, and about the commandments, as well as about the service of the house of God.

But who the persons were that he employed in transcribing these proverbs out of the ancient records, is more obscure. Some of the Hebrews say, Shebna the scribe, and his officers or clerks that were under the principal secretary: others add Eliakim and Joah: (who are joined together in 2 Kings xviii. 26. 37.) others fancy them to have been Esaiah (a person of great quality, near of kin to the king, and very familiar with him), together with Hosea and Micah; who all lived in the days of Hezekiah, and might possibly undertake this excellent work. In which they assert some things, which are to be found in the foregoing parts of this book, in words but little different, as, ver. 24. of this chapter, and chap. xxvi. 13. 15. 22. and other places, of which I cannot stay here to give an account.

[*b*] They begin the book with a sentence, which the Lord Bacon applies to all the learning and wisdom of Solomon. "In which (saith he) Solomon challenges nothing to himself, but only the honour of the inquisition and invention of truth: *which it is the glory of God to conceal, and the glory of a king to find out.* As if the Divine Majesty took delight to hide his works, to the end to have them found out; and as if kings could not attain greater honour (or pleasure or recreation either) than to employ themselves in that business: considering the great command they have of wits, and means, whereby the vestigation of all things may be effected." Thus he, lib. vi. of the Advanc. of Learning, chap. 6.

Which is a very ingenious gloss, if we refer both parts of the sentence to one and the same matter: tacitly admonishing Hezekiah, and in him all succeeding kings, not to spend their time in any thing so much, as in searching after truth; and endeavouring to understand not only the secrets of government, but of the laws of God, and of all his works: that they may not be imposed upon by false colours and deceitful glosses; which cunning wits are apt to put upon causes that are brought before them; nay, upon the book of God itself.

But if the words be well examined, they will be found to speak rather of different matters; which God conceals, and into which kings penetrate. By which some understand one thing, and some another: but taking the word *elohim* to relate to God's government of the world; that which I have said in the Paraphrase seems to me the nearest to the business. And Jansenius's exposition is not forced, who discourses to this purpose: It is part of God's glory that he need search into nothing; besides, he perfectly knows all things: and yet need not declare that he takes notice of every thing (because he can do it when he pleases), but rather seem to dissemble his knowledge; in which he wonderfully declares his patience and long-suffering towards us. But kings on earth must not herein imitate him; for it is their honour to search diligently and inquire into the state of their kingdom, and to correct presently what they find amiss, lest it be out of their power, when it is strengthened by long custom and numerous offenders. But especially in difficult and intricate business, covered with darkness and obscurity, perplexed with many windings and turnings, and with crafty and subtle conveyances; there to spy light, and by wisdom and diligence to rip up a foul matter, and, searching the cause to the bottom, to make a discovery of all, is a thing most worthy of a king, and tends highly to his honour. In short, as it makes for the glory of God, that he need not inquire into any thing, but, when he knows all things, yet conceals that knowledge: so, on the contrary side, it makes for the glory of kings, that, when they are forced to confess, that they are ignorant, as well as other men, of many things; they make such diligent inquiry, that they discover and detect those things which others have entangled, and would have buried in darkness.

To some such purpose all interpreters expound these words, save one: who refers both parts of the sentence to kings (understanding by *elohim, gods,* judges and princes) in this sense; "Wise kings preserve the reverence which is due to their persons and place, by concealing carefully their own intentions and counsels; and by finding out the designs of other men." Thus Maldonate; which I mention, because it is a great truth, though not the sense of the words, but rather the meaning of the following verse, (ver. 2.)

[*c*] Which concerns kings also, as some of those that come after likewise do (which would incline one to think this part of the book of Proverbs was particularly collected for the use of Hezekiah), and hath received this gloss from the same great man I named before, the Lord Bacon: who gives this as one of the chief reasons why the hearts of kings are inscrutable, because "they being at the very top of human desires, have not, for the most part, any particular ends proposed to themselves (none at least to which they vehemently and constantly aspire),

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by the site and distance of which ends we may be directed to take the measure and scale of the rest of their actions: whereas there is no private person, who is not altogether like a traveller, that goes intently aiming at some certain terms of his journey, where he may stay and rest: from whence one may probably conjecture, what he will do, or not do. For if any thing conduce to the end at which he aims, it is likely he will do it; but if it cross his design, he will not." Therefore he passes this judicious observation upon the whole: that "princes are best interpreted by their natures, and private persons by their ends." (Adv. of Learn. book viii. chap. 2.)

But from hence also he observes (in his first book), that it is best not to be too inquisitive to penetrate into the hearts of kings: since we are so ignorant of the things we see with our eyes every day; which the custom of the Levant aims at, that makes it a heinous offence to gaze and fix their eyes upon princes: *which is barbarous in the outward ceremony, but good in the moral:* for it becomes not subjects to pry too far into their princes' counsels. But it may as well check the ambition as the curiosity of private persons; because they can hardly be sure of that favour which they may imagine their prince hath for them: there being such depths in their inclinations and affections as they cannot sound.

But in the next verses princes are admonished that there is no policy like true virtue to support their thrones: and that in order to it they should not keep so much as one ill man about them; who ofttimes corrupts the whole court, and disturbs the whole kingdom.

[*d*] And in the next verse he admonishes subjects not to be vainly ambitious; nor bold and forward to thrust themselves into offices, or into a rank that doth not belong to them: but to be modest, especially in the prince's presence; and (according to our Saviour's rule) to be invited to honour, rather than greedily seek it. And withal he secretly commends to kings the care of keeping up their state and dignity: not suffering every body to intrude into their presence, but giving a check to proud, bold, and saucy persons.

Then follow private instructions, not to be too forward to go to law; and when we do, to manage suits fairly, without aspersing those with whom we contend, and without breaking the laws of friendship: which require us, not to discover the secrets wherewith another hath entrusted us, (ver. 9, 10.)

[*e*] In the eleventh verse I have followed Maimonides's interpretation of the word *maskijoth;* in his preface to his More Nevochim. And it being doubtful, whether by *apples of gold,* he mean apples that look like gold, or apples made of gold; I have expressed both.

[*f*] But I must not give a particular account of every verse; and therefore I shall only add, that I have taken the meaning of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses to be, that *moderation is good in all things, especially in those that please us:* as *honey* doth; which was so plentiful in those countries (as it is in many other), that it was ordinarily found in the *woods,* and *holes of rocks,* &c. as may be seen in Bochart, (lib. iv. cap. 12. par. xi. de Sac. Animal.)

[*g*] In the twentieth verse I have followed Melancthon in what he observes out of Pliny concerning *nitre* (whose nature is not now well known), that it is exasperated by *vinegar* or *lime.* But, in the latter end of the verse, I have kept to our translation, which, by *lebra,* understands a heart ill affected by grief or sorrow: which he takes literally for an evil or wicked heart. And makes this the meaning (which some others have followed), that *pertinacious sinners are made more furious by admonitions.*

In all ancient translations there follows, after this verse, this sentence: *As a moth in a garment, or a worm in wood; so is heaviness in the heart of man.* But St. Jerome, in the latter end of his commentaries upon Isaiah, tells us, that it was *sub obelo* in Origen's works: where he noted all superfluous additions with that mark.

[*h*] I must not omit neither, that the twenty-third verse will admit of a quite contrary sense to that in our translation; and is by some rendered thus: *As the north wind begetteth rain* (for so it doth in some climates), *so a backbiting tongue raiseth up anger and indignation* (which appear in the countenance both of him that believes the calumny, and of him that is calumniated; when he knows how he is abused).

[*i*] There is no great difficulty in verse twenty-six. But interpreters are divided about this; whether he spake of a just man's falling into *sin,* or into some *calamity.* Melancthon understands the latter, and makes this the sense; that *even wise men's minds are extremely troubled, when they see the wicked prevail against the virtuous:* of which he gives a great many examples. But I have taken in both; and have referred it also to all manner of sufferings, and not restrained it to public injustice, as the Lord Bacon doth; who hath this excellent observation upon the place: (book viii. chap. 2. parab. 25.) "This parable teaches us, that states and republics must, above all things, beware of an unjust and infamous sentence, in any cause of great importance; especially where the innocent is not absolved, but he that is not guilty condemned. For injuries ravaging among private persons do, indeed, trouble and pollute the streams of justice, yet only as in the smaller rivulets: but such unjust judgments, as I mentioned, from which examples are derived, infect and distain the very fountain of justice. For when the courts of justice side with injustice, the state of things is turned, as into a public robbery; "et homo homini fit lupus," *and one man preys upon another.*

[*k*] With this verse, De Dieu connects the next, (ver. 27.) and gives the easiest account that I find any where of the Hebrew text: only translating that particle *but,* which we translate *so;* as it is often taken in the Scripture. And his sense is this: "Though the just may be trampled under foot for awhile by the wicked, yet their glory shall not perish: but remain so fresh and sweet, that it shall be a glorious thing to inquire into their glorious actions." So he would have the verse translated thus: *To eat much honey, indeed, is not good; but to search out their glory* (*viz.* of just men) *is glory.* And if we take the verse by itself, then the sense may be this, as the Belgic interpreters translate it (of whom he, if I mistake not, was one): *To eat much honey is not good: but to search into excellent things is a great commendation; and we cannot therein easily offend by excess:* which is quite contrary to the Vulgar Latin, whose sense and meaning (though not the words) may be defended,

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even without repeating the word *not*, as we do in our translation; in this manner: *As honey, though pleasant to the taste, oppresses the stomach, if it be immoderately used: so, upon a curious search into things sublime and glorious (though they be most sweet and desirable to our understanding), we shall find ourselves overwhelmed with a greater glory than we can bear.* And so the latter part of the verse should, word for word, be thus translated: *The search of their glory* (*viz.* of things as sweet as honey, but transcending our knowledge) *is glory: viz.* too bright for our weak minds.

[*l*] The last verse, which in the Hebrew belongs to all men, whose passions are unruly, is by the Vulgar restrained to him that cannot command his tongue: which is part of the sense. For as men may go out of a city without walls when they will; so every thing is blurted out by him, even the greatest secrets; and by too much liberty he disobliges others and undoes himself.

Ver. 1. *THESE are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.*] Besides the foregoing lessons sententiously delivered by Solomon, these also were collected out of his works, by some of the servants of that good king Hezekiah: who, setting himself with all his heart to reform the people of Judah, among other things wherein God blessed his endeavours, (2 Chron. xxxi. 21.) caused these proverbs to be transcribed out of the ancient records, for their fuller instruction. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.*] The almighty Creator and Sovereign of the world declares his supereminent majesty, authority, and wisdom (which cannot be ignorant of any thing), and procures to himself the greatest veneration, by concealing the reasons of his decrees, and of his judgments: but earthly princes, whose knowledge is very imperfect, do themselves the greatest honour, when they decree and judge nothing but after the strictest search and examination, and give the clearest reason for their proceedings. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.*] It is as impossible for vulgar minds to penetrate into the secrets of state, and understand the counsels and designs of wise princes (and the various ways and means whereby they project to effect their ends), as it is to know how far it is from hence to the highest heavens; or how far to the centre of the earth, upon which we tread. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.*] As when the finer hath separated the dross from the silver, it will become so pliable, that he may cast or work it into what form he pleaseth:

Ver. 5. *Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.*] So let the king not only remove the wicked (who are the scum of the nation) from his counsels and company, but punish them severely; and his people will be easily moulded to righteousness, piety, and all manner of virtue: which will settle his kingdom in peace, and make his government durable.

Ver. 6. *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men.*] And among other virtues, learn humility and modesty, if thou art a subject; though never so rich: and do not make thyself taken notice of by too splendid an appearance at court: much less by intruding thyself into the place, where none but the great officers or nobles ought to come. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 7. *For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.*] For it will be much more for thine honour, and thy satisfaction too, if, standing at a distance, thou art invited to come up higher (whither of thyself thou durst not presume to go), than to have a check given thee for thy forwardness, and to be disgracefully thrust out of the presence of the prince; unto whom thou hast adventured to approach too near.

Ver. 8. *Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.*] Take some time to consider well, both the goodness of thy cause, and its weightiness, and how to manage it, before thou bring an action at law against thy neighbour; lest, in conclusion, thou wish it had not been begun; when he puts thee to open shame, by shewing thou hast impleaded him wrongfully, or for a trifle.

Ver. 9. *Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another.*] Nay, let me advise thee, though thy cause be just and good (yet the event being doubtful), to debate things privately, and, if it be possible, to make up the difference between yourselves; especially if it be about a secret business, which ought not easily to be divulged: or, if it cannot be composed, yet let not hatred or anger provoke thee to discover other secrets, merely to disgrace thy adversary, when they appertain not to the cause.

Ver. 10. *Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.*] Lest not only every one that heareth reproach thee for thy perfidiousness; but if he be enraged to retort such infamous things upon thee, as shall stick so close, that thou shalt never be able to wipe off the dirt, nor recover thy credit, as long as thou livest.

Ver. 11. *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*] A word of counsel, reproof, or comfort, handsomely delivered, in due time and place, &c. is no less grateful and valuable, than golden balls, or beautiful apples, presented in a silver net-work basket. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 12. *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.*] A good man will not think himself reproached, but rather obliged, by a prudent reproof: which, meeting with an attentive, considering, and patient mind, makes a man receive it so kindly; that he esteems him who bestows it, as much as if he had hung a jewel of gold in his ear, or put the richest ornament about his neck.

Ver. 13. *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him; for he refresheth the soul of his masters.*] A trusty messenger (or ambassador), that faithfully and dexterously executes his commission, to the satisfaction of the persons that sent him, is as welcome, when he returns, as the coldest drink or air is to the reapers in the time of harvest: for he revives the spirits of his masters, who were ready to faint, with fear of ill success in their business.

Ver. 14. *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like*

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clouds and wind without rain.] He that raiseth high expectations, by promising much, and then deceives them by performing little or nothing; leaves him that depended on these promises, as sad as the country people are, after the clouds have made a great show, and the wind a great sound, but are followed by no showers of rain.

Ver. 15. *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.*] It is not prudent violently to oppose a prince in his resolutions; who will more easily yield to reason, if one give way to his heat, and patiently expect the fittest time to represent things to him: but this must be done also with soft and tender language; which is apt to bow the stiffest minds, and work upon the hardest hearts.

Ver. 16. *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.*] All pleasures should be used like honey; which when it offers itself, eat as much as suffices thee for thy refreshment, not as much as thou desirest: for as moderately taken it strengthens the body, and prolongs life; so too much of it disturbs the stomach and turns the pleasure into pain and torment. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 17. *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.*] Which is wholesome advice, even in the enjoyment of a good neighbour, or friend (the sweetest thing in the world); do not upon every light occasion interrupt his weightier affairs: lest having too much of thy company, it grow not only troublesome but loathsome to him; and his love turn into hatred of thee.

Ver. 18. *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.*] There is nothing more pernicious than him that makes no conscience of bearing false witness against his neighbour; his tongue alone serves him instead of a maul to beat down a man's fame, or break in pieces his estate; nay, instead of a sword to take away his life, and of a sharp arrow to destroy him, not only when he is near, but much more when he is afar off, not able to answer for himself.

Ver. 19. *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*] As a broken tooth or leg out of joint, not only fails a man when he comes to use it, but likewise puts him into pain; so doth a faithless person serve them that depend upon him, when they have the greatest need of his help: and such also is the confidence that a faithless person himself places in riches, or craft, or great friends, &c. which some time or other will disappoint him to his great grief, when he expects the most from them.

Ver. 20. *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre; so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.*] It is as improper to sing pleasant songs to a man full of grief as to take away his garment from him in sharp weather, or to pour vinegar upon nitre: for as the one increaseth his sense of cold, and the other irritates the nitre; so such unseasonable mirth makes a sad man's heart far more heavy and sorrowful than it was before. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 21. *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.*] If he that hates thee be hungry or thirsty, or wants any other necessaries, take the opportunity to express thy kindness to him; by succouring him in his need, and thereby preserving him from perishing.

Ver. 22. *For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.*] For if he have the least spark of goodness in him, it will work a change in his mind; and make him throw off all his enmities: or, if it have the contrary effect, he shall have so much the sorer punishment; and thou shalt not lose thy reward, which the Lord himself will give thee.

Ver. 23. *The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*] As the sharpness of the north wind scatters clouds, and drives away rain; so a severe countenance, full of indignation against him that traduces his neighbour secretly, not only gives a check, but puts a stop, to his slanderous tongue; which would not tell such lies if they were not greedily received. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 24. *It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman, and in a wide house.*] It is more desirable (as was said before, xxi. 9.) to dwell poorly, inconveniently, and alone in the open air, exposed to all the injuries of the weather; nay, to be cooped up in a little corner on the house-top; than to have a spacious habitation and numerous family, governed by a contentious, brawling wife; whose perpetual scoldings within doors, upon all occasions, are far worse than the thunder, lightning, and blustering winds, which may molest him without.

Ver. 25. *As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.*] Good and certain news, especially from a far country (from whence it is hard to have any true intelligence), is as grateful to him that longed to hear of his friends there, as cool water is to a thirsty traveller; especially when he meets with it in remote and uninhabited places, where he did not expect it.

Ver. 26. *A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.*] A truly religious, just, and charitable man, is such a blessing unto all about him, that they suffer no less when he is oppressed (and thrown out of authority) by the violence and craft of wicked men, or when he disgraces himself by any foul sin, or loses his courage, and dare not oppose impiety; than they do when dirt and filth are cast into a public fountain; or a spring is stopped up, or corrupted and made useless. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 27. *It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory is not glory.*] Honey is very pleasant to the taste; but to eat much of it (as we said before, ver. 16.) is so far from being wholesome, that it is hurtful: and in like manner to hunt greedily after honour and glory, of which men are very desirous, proves at last not honourable, but reproachful to them. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 28. *He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*] He that cannot govern his passions, especially his anger, but suffers them to break out upon all occasions, lies open to innumerable mischiefs; like a city unwalled, or whose fortifications are decayed; which is exposed to the rapine of every enemy. See Arg. [*l*]

CHAP. XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] This chapter begins with a tacit admonition to kings (for whose use principally this *last part* of the book of

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Proverbs was collected, as I noted in the beginning of the foregoing chapter), to be very careful in disposing preferments only to worthy persons. For bad men are made worse by them; and they do as much hurt to others, by the abuse of their power to the discouraging of virtue, and promoting vice, as snow or hail doth to the fruits of the earth, when they are ripe and ready to be gathered. So that we may make this aphorism out of Solomon's words—that the blending of summer and winter would not cause a greater disorder in the natural world, than the disposal of honour to bad men (and consequently throwing contempt upon the good) doth in the world moral: where wicked men, when they are in power, if they can do no more, will at least pronounce anathemas against those that do not deserve it.

[*b*] So the Hebrews understand the next verse; which I have extended farther, and translated also those two words *zippor* and *deror* a *sparrow* and a *wild pigeon*, (see Psal. lxxxiv. 3.) For *deror* signifying here a particular bird, in all likelihood *zippor* doth so too: and then all agree it signifies a *sparrow*, as the other (Bochart hath proved) doth (not a *swallow*, but) a *ring-dove*, or *turtle*, or some of that kind; which are famous for swiftness and strength of flight. And the meaning of this verse is, That curses which fly out of men's mouths causelessly, shall no more alight where they would have them, than a sparrow which wanders uncertainly, or a dove that flies away swiftly, will settle according to their direction: or thus, Such curses fly as swiftly as those birds (whose propriety it is to wander and fly up and down) over the head of him against whom they are directed, and never touch him.

Melancthon by *curses* in this place understands *calumnies;* of which the world is too full: which shall not rest upon a good man long before they be confuted. But he himself is forced to confess that sometimes they do great mischief first: and instances in Joseph, Palamedes, Aristides, Theamenes, and Socrates, who lost his life by this means. After which, he observes, the tragedy of Palamedes being acted (in which the poet bewailed the death of the best of the Greeks, who sung like a sweet nightingale, but hurt no man), the citizens expelled the accusers of Socrates out of Athens. But this doth not so well agree with the Hebrew word, which signifies such evil speaking as amounts to a *curse:* which the wise man saith shall not rest upon a man when it is causeless, but fly away like a bird that settles no where till it comes to its proper place: *As the curse returns many times, and settles upon him that made it, when it lights not on him that was cursed:* which sense, one reading of the Hebrew expresses plainly enough; and therefore I have not omitted it.

[*c*] After which observations, there follows another to shew that a lewd fool should rather be sent to a house of correction than have any preferment, (ver. 3.) Nothing less will cure him, as it follows, ver. 4, 5. where he admonishes us, how vain it is to hold any discourse with him, any farther than merely to shew that he is a fool; and, if it be possible, to confute (not what he says, but) the vain opinion he hath conceived of himself. St. Cyprian hath given a good account of these two verses in the beginning of his letter to Demetrian: who having babbled a long time against Christianity, like a mad man, with loud clamours only and no sense, the good father thought fit to answer him with neglect, and overcome rage with patience; thinking it to no more purpose to go about to repress an irreligious man with religion, or restrain a mad man with meekness, than to offer light to the blind, or speak to the deaf, or reason with a brute. But when Demetrian at last offered something that looked like an argument, St. Cyprian could not any longer keep silence; lest his modesty should be thought disturbful of his cause; and whilst he disdained to refute false criminations he should seem to acknowledge the crime.

Melancthon wholly refers both verses to reproaches and calumnies: which he shews it is fit, either utterly to neglect, or to confute in a few words.

[*d*] Then the wise man proceeds to shew, that such a fool is very unfit to be so much as sent on a message; which he will neither deliver right, nor return a good answer. The first seems to be expressed by *cutting off the legs;* as much as to say, a business committed to such a person will no more proceed, than a man can go without legs: the latter, by *drinking an injury;* as much as to say, instead of satisfaction in what he desires, he must be content to swallow abundance of affronts and ill-dealing.

[*e*] After this follow several other observations about fools: in some of which there are words of no small difficulty; which I cannot here particularly explain, as some may desire, because it would take up too much room. But I have expressed the sense of them as well as I could in the Paraphrase. As, for example, the word *dalju* (ver. 7.) signifying something of *elevation* or lifting-up, I have explained *dancing;* than which nothing is more unsuitable to a lame man: as speeches full of reason in themselves, are most absurd when witlessly applied by a fool.

[*f*] And the word *margema,* in the eighth verse, which is variously translated by interpreters, I have expressed in two senses of it: but look upon it as superfluous to trouble the reader with what learned men (such as Scaliger and Selden, &c.) have written concerning the heaps of stones in the highway, into which superstitious people were wont to cast one as they passed by, in honour to Mercury, &c. for I do not think this custom was as old as Solomon's time. Nor is it necessary to understand such a heap of stones as covered the dead bodies of those who were stoned to death: but, in general, any heap of pebbles; or else a *sling*, as the Chaldee and the LXX. whom we follow, expound it.

[*g*] And, ver. 10. the first word, *rab, great,* may be applied either to God, or to a prince: and that either good or bad. All which I have taken notice of; and expressed the different senses wherein the word *cholalti* is used. But there is one signification more of the word *rab,* which the Lutherans generally follow (which I think fit to mention here, because I have not touched on it in the Paraphrase, and it makes no improper sense of the place), who take it for a *master* in any sort of art or learning; and expound it thus: *A master in his art forms all things excellently well: but he that hires a fool* (or a *bungler,* as we speak), *gives his money to have his work spoiled.* Thus Melancthon; who takes it to be an admonition belonging to prudence in the choice of fit persons for every business; not be-

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lieving those that crack and brag what they are able to do, &c. *ex. gr.* " plurimi sunt impostores, qui volunt videri medici: plurimi indocti concionatores, qui adulantur vulgo aut potentioribus." And he heaps up many excellent sayings to this purpose, that men *should meddle only with that which they understand:* concluding with this admonition to the people, which they should always remember—*ignorance makes men impudent.* And thus Castalio took the word *rab;* but to this sense: *A wise man does his business himself; and not by fools, who mar it all.*

[*h*] Among other examples of the wise man's observations, (ver. 11.) Melancthon mentions this; which is not commonly noted: The Sodomites, being divinely delivered by the help of Abraham, who overthrew the army that had spoiled them, and recovered the spoil; forgetting their former punishment and marvellous deliverance, ran furiously into more foul sins, wherein they utterly perished by a most terrible vengeance.

[*i*] Then follow, after one observation concerning a conceited fellow, several observations about *sloth;* some of which have been noted before in the foregoing parts of this book, but are here put together by the *men* of Hezekiah in some order, and with some additions. For here seems to be three degrees of sloth represented. The first, when a man is loath to stir out of doors about his business in the field; (ver. 13.) the second, when he is loath so much as to leave his bed; (ver. 14.) and the third and highest, when he will scarce put his hand to his mouth, (ver. 15.) by which hyperbolical expression he most admirably sets forth the incredible laziness of some men, which increases upon them continually, if they will not shake it off. And yet so presumptuous (he observes, ver. 16.) they are withal, that they laugh at those who take a great deal of pains to be wise; and fancy themselves much wiser, because, without any pains, they can find fault sometime in other men's works. Nay, this very thing, perhaps, they think a piece of folly, to study hard, imagining it to be the greatest wisdom to enjoy their ease, and reap the benefit of other men's labours. After which follows an admonition against rash intermeddling in other men's affairs; against backbiters and dissemblers; especially such as are malicious, and cover the malignity of their minds under fair shows of love, or perhaps of friendship. In several of which verses the words are capable of more senses than one; which I have endeavoured to knit together in the Paraphrase. An example of which I might give particularly, in ver. 24. where the word *jinnaker* may be rendered either *he pretends to be what he is not,* or *he is known to be what he is.*

[*k*] And what Solomon says in the next verse concerning him that *flattereth* another, some extend to all wicked men, none of which are to be trusted: but as one of our own writers advises, Though a wicked man hath done thee seven courtesies, and promises fair for the eighth, yet do not trust him; for there are seven abominations in his heart. And though thou mayest think thou hast some hank upon him, do not depend upon it; for he can unfetter himself from them all, as Samson from the green withes and cords wherewith the Philistines bound him, unless God mightily restrain him.

[*l*] But I only observe one thing more; that the last verse is capable of this sense, which I have in part touched:—A liar is not capable to be a friend; for if he be reprehended, truth makes him hate the person that detects his falsehood; if he be not reprehended, his fulsome flatteries will alienate from him the mind of his friend.

Ver. 1. *AS snow in summer, and as rain in harvest; so honour is not seemly for a fool.*] As snow or rain is so unseasonable, that it does a great deal of hurt in summertime, when the fruits of the earth are ready to be gathered: so is dignity and authority very ill placed in the hands of a fool or wicked man, who knows not how to use it, but will do mischief both to himself and others with it. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying; so the curse causeless shall not come.*] Though men are too prone in their passion to wish evil to others, or by mistake to pronounce solemn curses against them; yet there is no reason to fear such rash imprecations, or unjust censures: for they shall do no harm (unless it be to him that makes them), but pass by the innocent like a sparrow, that wanders nobody knows whither; or a wild dove, than which few birds fly away more swiftly. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.*] A horse that will not stir without a whip, and an ass that will not go without a goad, or will go only his own way, without a bridle to turn about his stiff neck, are fit emblems of a senseless sot: who must be treated like a beast, and by smart punishments be excited unto his duty, to which he hath no list; and checked from running into that evil to which he is inclined.

Ver. 4. *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*] For words will not reclaim a wicked fool; with whom, if thou hast occasion to contend, observe these two rules: Answer him not at all, because it is to no purpose; at least, not in his own way, with bawling, railing, and reproaches, which is to be as very a fool as himself. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be also wise in his own conceit.*] But if he grow insolent by thy silence, fancying that he is unanswerable; then say so much only as may serve to take down his presumption, and make it appear that he is a fool: for nothing is more dangerous, than to let him go away with a high opinion of his own abilities.

Ver. 6. *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet and drinketh damage.*] He that sends a witless man, or one that minds nothing but his pleasure, to treat about his business; shall be sure not only to miscarry in it, but to suffer exceeding great damage by his ill management. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 7. *The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.*] A wise saying as ill becomes a fool, as dancing doth a cripple: for as his lameness never so much appears, as when he would seem nimble; so the other's folly is never so ridiculous, as when he would seem wise. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 8. *As he that bindeth a stone in a sling; so is he that giveth honour to a fool.*] As a stone put into a sling stays not long there, so is that honour thrown away which is bestowed upon a fool: who not knowing how to use his au-

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thority (unless it be to do mischief, even to him that conferred it on him), it is as ill placed in his hands, as a diamond when it is cast into a heap of common stones. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 9. *As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.*] It is as dangerous for a fool to meddle with a proverb, as for a drunkard to handle a thorn; wherewith he hurts himself: but the sharpest saying no more touches a fool with any compunction, though spoken by his own mouth; than the drunkard feels the thorn, when it runs into his hand, and gives a grievous wound.

Ver. 10. *The great God, that formed all things, both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth the transgressors.*] The great God, who made all things, governs them also most wisely and equally; dispensing, for instance, his punishments suitable to men's sins, whether out of ignorance, or of wilful wickedness: whom a good prince imitates; but a bad proves an universal grievance, by employing either fools or profane persons in his service; who vex the rest of his subjects. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 11. *As a dog returneth to his vomit; so a fool returneth to his folly.*] As a dog, when he hath vomited up the meat which made him sick, is no sooner well but he returns to it and eats it up again; forgetting how ill it agreed with him; so an imprudent person commits the same error over again for which he formerly smarted; and a lewd sinner shamelessly and greedily repeats the crimes of which he hath repented as grievous and hurtful to him. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*] Such a sottish person is hardly curable: and yet, if he be not altogether insensible of his folly, nor refuse admonition, there is more hope of his amendment, than of his who takes himself to be so wise and virtuous that he despises his betters, and thinks he is above instruction.

Ver. 13. *The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets.*] He that hath no mind to labour never wants pretences for his idleness: for his fancy represents such terrible and insuperable difficulties to him, as seldom happen; and frights him with a vain conceit of them, when he might soon satisfy himself there are none at all. See Arg. [*i*] (See xxii. 13.)

Ver. 14. *As the door turneth upon its hinges; so doth the slothful upon his bed.*] As a door turns to and fro upon its hinges, but never stirs from thence; so is a sluggard fixed to his bed: where he turns from one side to the other (and is uneasy even in his sloth), but still remains in his idle posture.

Ver. 15. *The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.*] All things seem so hard to such a lazy wretch, that it is not easy to persuade him to pull his hand from under his arm: but even this appears like a tiresome business, though it be only to put his meat into his mouth. (See xix. 24.)

Ver. 16. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*] Yet one of these idle companions, whose wit serves him only to prate, and carp at men's honest labours, takes himself to be much wiser than a great many able persons who can give a satisfactory account of any thing that is proposed to them.

Ver. 17. *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.*] As he that takes an angry dog by the ears is in danger to be bitten; whether he hold him, or let him go: so he that furiously engages in other men's quarrels, whom he lights upon by chance, and in which he is not concerned, shall hardly escape the displeasure of one or both of them; whichsoever part he takes, or if he take neither.

Ver. 18. *As a mad man, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death.*] As he that throws flames, darts, or other deadly or destructive things, and hides his malice by feigning himself mad, is far more dangerous than he that is mad indeed:

Ver. 19. *So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?*] So he is worse than an open enemy, who cunningly abuses his neighbour, and under a fair show puts foul cheats upon him; and then asks him, Why he resents it so heinously? for he was only in jest; and intended merely to try how he would take it.

Ver. 20. *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth.*] Look upon him as an incendiary, that carries tales and whispers false stories; and expel him from the family which he hath disturbed by backbiting; for as the fire will go out, if you take away the wood that feeds it; so will quarrels and contentions cease, when he is thrust out of doors that blows up the flame.

Ver. 21. *As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*] Avoid also an angry man, who is hard to please, and apt to find fault with every thing; for provoking language as quickly passes into quarrels, as dead coals do into burning, or wood into fire, when they are laid upon them.

Ver. 22. *The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*] But there is never need of greater caution, than when a whisperer makes a show of harmless intentions, and of love and kindness, when he traduces others; nay, seems perhaps to do it very unwillingly, and with great grief of heart; and not without excuses also, for the persons whom he backbites: for his words are stabs, which give them the most deadly wounds; and sink deep into the minds of those that hear them. (See xviii. 8.)

Ver. 23. *Burning lips, and a wicked heart, are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.*] Ill and angry language suits as well with ill-will, as silver dross with a piece of a broken pot: and he that studies to hide his hatred under most affectionate words will as certainly be detected and vilified, as a potsherd that makes a fair show at a distance when it is covered merely with the scum of silver.

Ver. 24. *He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him.*] And yet there is nothing more usual, than for him that hates thee to counterfeit the greatest kindness to thee; when he means thereby only the more easily and securely to deceive and undo thee: though let him study never so much to disguise his inward rancour, he commonly lets fall some word or other, whereby it may be discovered; nay, it may be known sometimes by his extraordinary expressions of friendship, beyond all reason and measure.

Ver. 25. *When he speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are seven abominations in his heart.*] And thou wilt the more certainly discover it, if thou observest this rule,

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not to be too credulous; no, not when he gives thee the kindest words, and beseeches thee to believe him: but to remember, that if hatred still remain in his heart, it will suggest to him the most detestable designs against thee, and that without number See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 26. *Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.*] And it were well, if such a man would think, that it is hard for him to carry on his malicious designs so craftily, but, though a private person may not be able to find out his wickedness, yet, when he comes to be examined by the public council, some or other will discover it: and then that dissembled hatred, which he thought to have hid in secrecy, will be openly exposed to the view of all the world.

Ver. 27. *Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.*] For by the righteous judgment of God (as hath been anciently observed, Psal. vii. 15. ix. 15.) the wicked are not only disappointed in their designs, but involve themselves in that mischief, which they intended to do to others: just like a man that falls into a pit, digged with his own hands; or that is crushed in pieces by a stone, which returns upon him, as he rolls it up a steep place for the oppression of another.

Ver. 28. *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*] A forger of falsehood is not content to undo others by his calumnies, but his guilt makes him hate those men above all others; unless it be him that confutes his falsehood and proves him a liar: whom he cannot endure, because he disables him from doing any farther mischief unto others; which is the design of all his glossing and flattering words, which prove at last the ruin of himself. See Arg. [*l*]

CHAP. XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] This chapter begins with a most useful admonition of the inconstancy and uncertainty of all things here below; like to which there are a great many in other authors, which several writers have collected (but I shall not trouble the reader withal), particularly Melancthon: who observes, that the wise man here teaches us *modesty;* and prohibits these two great vices—confidence in ourselves, or any thing we have; and rash undertaking necessary things, out of a foolish hope they will succeed according to our desires. Wise and good men should only meddle within the bounds of their calling; and depend also on God for his blessing: but not attempt things without just cause, presuming they can carry them as they please. Thus Pericles (says he) made an unnecessary war for a slight reason; which many then judged to have been neglected: and Alcibiades in like manner passed over into Sicily: and Hannibal made war upon the Romans: and Pompey would needs try his fortune (as they called it) in war, when he might have kept peace upon honest conditions. All these were destructive to their countries, and the proverb was verified in them, Μάταιοι μάταια λογίζονται δι' ἐπιθυμίας, *Vain men devise vain things, according as their desires lead them.*

[*b*] And there is nothing more foolish than the vanity of praising themselves; which follows in the next verse, (ver. 2.) and is noted by all authors; who have many sharp sayings about it, which I also pass over. But shall take notice (because it is still more useful) what the same good man Melancthon observes upon the third verse, that "fools and unskilful people are more apt to be angry than others:" because they consider not the infirmity of mankind, and that there are many errors of others which ought to be borne withal, and cured after a gentle manner: whence that true saying, *Imperito nunquam quicquam injustius est.* But as goodness is most eminent in God; who himself bears with many evils in us, and commands us to *forgive and it shall be forgiven us:* so wise men bend their minds to goodness and lenity; remembering the common infirmities of all men, their own as well as others'. Nor can there be a more lively picture of the implacable spirit of a fool, than that which our Saviour himself hath drawn in the gospel; of a cruel servant, who, when he had been forgiven sixty ton of gold by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant a hundred pence, (Matt. xviii.) This sentence of Solomon therefore, saith he, admonishes us to avoid the company of fools, *qui neque cognoscere neque ignoscere norunt;* as well as to be so wise ourselves as to moderate our passions and to be mindful of human weakness. For *nihil magnum quod non est placidum,* as Seneca speaks, like unto which he adds other sayings out of Homer and Pliny.

[*c*] In the next verse but one some think the wise man speaks of such friends as are too tender and delicate; and for fear of offending others, have not the courage to tell them of their errors: whom the great Lord Bacon follows; and thinks Solomon prefers an open enemy before such a friend: which I do not take to be the meaning; but shall here set down his excellent observation upon these words: (Adv. of Learn. book viii. chap. 2. parab. 29.) "The parable (saith he) reprehends the soft nature of such friends as will not use the privilege which friendship gives them, in admonishing their friends with freedom and confidence, as well of their errors as of their dangers. For what shall I do? (says such a tender-hearted friend) or which way shall I turn myself? I love him as dearly as any man can do another: and if any misfortune should befal him, I could willingly pawn my own person for his redemption. But I know his disposition; if I deal freely with him, I shall offend him; at least make him sad: and yet do him no good. And I shall sooner estrange him from my friendship, than reclaim him from those courses, upon which his mind is resolved: such a friend as this, Solomon here represents as weak and worthless, and says, that a man may reap more profit from a manifest enemy than from such an effeminate friend. For he may, perhaps, hear that by way of reproach from an enemy, which, through too much indulgence, was faintly whispered by a friend."

[*d*] And one great reason why men are loath to tell others of their faults, is, because they are wont to take it heinously. If men were more willing to receive reproof, others would more faithfully give it: of which the wise man therefore admonishes us, ver. 6. where the word *naṭaroth* is so difficult that it admits various interpretations:

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some of which I have expressed in the Paraphrase. And made ver. 7. a caution against the immoderate enjoyment of pleasures: which commend themselves to us by their rarer use. As the next, (ver. 8.) is a caution against unsettledness of mind, and discontent with our present condition; which not only spoils all our pleasures, but often carries men restlessly to their ruin: where Melancthon suggests this useful meditation, that there is no condition of life, no function, without its cares, troubles, and dangers; which make men soon weary of it: according to the ancient saying, "Optat ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus." But the wise man would have us understand, that nothing is more dangerous than this; and therefore to take care, lest, tired and broken with disgusts, we lightly desert that kind of life to which we are rightly called. All the ancient wisdom hath observed, that such desultory humours never thrive: about which they have many proverbs, with which I shall not fill these papers.

[e] After this follow some advices about friendship, and other things; which have been noted before, in the foregoing parts of this book. And then he seems, (ver. 14.) to lay open the guise of flatterers, who hope to cully favour with their benefactors, by extolling their bounty with extravagant praises. So I have expounded that verse, not merely of those that praise others, but praise them for their kindness to themselves: as the word *barak* properly imports. The intention of which is only to get still more from them: which is commonly the end of all those that praise others immoderately, for their rare qualities and perfections; hoping thereby to make them extraordinary kind to them, above all other men. Thus the Lord Bacon hath observed about this matter: whose gloss upon these words is this, (in the forenamed place, parab. 33.) "Moderate and seasonable praises, uttered upon occasion, conduce both to men's fame and fortune; but immoderate, streporous, and unseasonably poured out, profit nothing: nay, rather, according to the sense of this parable, they do much prejudice. For, first, they manifestly betray themselves, either to proceed *from too much affection*, or from *studious affectation;* whereby they may rather ingratiate themselves with him whom they praise by false commendations, than adorn his person by just and deserved attributes: secondly, sparing and modest praises commonly invite such as are present *to something of their own to the commendation:* contrariwise, profuse and immodest praises invite the hearts to *detract and take away something that belongs to them:* thirdly (which is the principal point), *too much magnifying a man stirs up envy towards him: seeing all immoderate praises look like a reproach to others, who merit no less.*"

But beside this, I cannot quite pass by the gloss which some have made upon these words: who by *jaschkem babboker* (which I have applied only to their too much assiduity in praising others, as if one should say, *from morning to night*) understand making too much haste to praise men; when it is, as we speak, but *early days with them:* and they have made no progress in those virtues for which they are commended. And then the sense is, There is nothing more dangerous than to cry up men too soon for their parts or for their virtues, before they be sufficiently tried, and have made a due improvement: for this, instead of doing them service, proves many times their ruin: making them, that is, entertain a vain opinion of their own worth, and grow idle, or negligent, &c. and so dwindle away to nothing.

[f] What he saith afterward of *a railing wife*, (ver. 16.) may be thus expressed in short: There are three things that cannot be concealed, because they betray themselves: the wind, a strong perfume, and a scolding wife: with which some join the next verse, (ver. 17.) as a remedy for the mischief of a brawling wife; and thus render it: *As iron is easily joined with iron, so is a man with his equal.* And therefore the best way for a man to avoid the trouble of a bad wife is, not to choose one for his consort because she is rich, or because she is beautiful only; but because she is like him in humour, and inclination, and condition, &c. Thus the Tigurine version: and De Dieu to the same purpose; who makes this proverb no more than that of *like to like;* which best agree together. But this is too narrow; and therefore I have followed our, and indeed all the ancient translations: who take this to be of the same signification with another old saying, *One man is nobody;* and therefore God hath formed us to have a communion with each other: the necessity of which is expressed in abundance of ancient aphorisms; which admonish us to confer with others, and to hearken to the counsel and judgment of the wise. And daily experience shews us how dangerous it is, ἰδιοβουλεύειν, *to be a man's own counsellor*, and what is said of artificers may be applied unto all; *Every man is his own worst master.* To which purpose Melancthon alleges that of Euripides, ὁμιλία ἔτεκε τέχνας, *conversation brought forth arts:* when men, that is, not only observed one another's works, but conferred their thoughts together, and assisted one another's inventions. And he pertinently observes, that "the Christian doctrine, in the beginning of the Reformation, was opposed by those who would not hear others, but skulked like bats that fly the light, and devised new opinions out of their own heads, abhorrent from the approved form of doctrine. *Tales multi nunc sunt*, &c. There are many such now-a-days, who glory that they are αὐτοδίδακτοι, and admire their own dreams; refusing to hearken to the sound judgment of other men. But let us (saith he) be obedient to such precepts as this; which includes in it, first, *modesty*, in consideration of our own frailty; and then *prudence*, in advising with those who may teach us that of which we are ignorant." Thus he observes out of Synesius, that Apelles was wont to make Lysippus, the statuary, judge of all his pictures: and Lysippus, on the other side, made Apelles judge of all his statues, before they would expose them to be seen by others.

[g] The next verse but one, (ver. 19.) is understood so variously by interpreters, that it is a labour to number their expositions: some of which are directly contrary to the other. For, according as they take the *face* to be represented in *water;* either *perfectly*, or so *lubricously* and *moveably*, that it is hard to discern what sort of face it is: so they make it either *easy*, or *impossible*, to understand the hearts of other men. Melancthon took it in the latter sense; inculcating the old wholesome lessons, Μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν, and "Quos credis fidos, effuge, tutus eris," &c. But now it is generally expounded the

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other way: and some expound it of men's own hearts, and some of the hearts of other men. I have in the Paraphrase expressed two of those interpretations, which I looked upon as most simple. And think fit here to mention that of Castalio, who applies it to a man's self in this manner: "As a man may know what kind of face he hath, if he will look into the water; so he may know what kind of man he is, if he will examine his conscience." And this of Maldonate, who is alone (as far as I can find) in his exposition, which is this: "As a man's face may be seen in the water; so his heart, or his inward affections, may be seen in his countenance:" taking *man*, in the conclusion of the sentence, for the outward man, *i. e.* his countenance: and making the Hebrew run thus: "As a man's face is answerable to that face which appears in the water: so his heart is answerable to his countenance." The Lord Bacon, as I have expressed it in the beginning of my Paraphrase on this verse, takes the end of this parable to be, "to distinguish between the mind of wise men and of those that are not wise: comparing the former to *waters*, or *glasses* which receive and represent the forms and images of things; whereas the other are like to *earth*, or *rude* and *unpolished stone*, wherein nothing is reflected. And the mind of a wise man (which is so capable that it observes and comprehends an infinite diversity of natures and customs) is the more aptly compared to a *glass* or mirror; because in a glass he can see his own image, together with images of other men: which his eyes cannot do alone without the help of a glass."

And so this parable, it seems to me, may not unfitly be expounded after this manner:—A man may see himself while he looks upon other men; as well as know other men by considering his own inclinations.

[*h*] This preface is already so long, that I must not mention the various interpretations of the twenty-first verse. I have expressed that which is nearest to our translation; and seems to be the truest touchstone of this sort, whereby to try the goodness or badness of men's minds. Some of which are so incorrigible, he shews in the next verse, that the sorest afflictions will not amend them.

[*i*] And then, in conclusion, he presses every one to diligence about his own business: and especially commends the pastoral care, which men should have about their flocks and their herds: which are the best sort of possessions, he shews, in several regards. First, because most durable, for they are always increasing of themselves; (ver. 24.) secondly, because easily preserved without much labour, or fraudulent arts; God himself providing liberally for them; (ver. 25.) thirdly, because most profitable; yielding all things necessary for food and raiment, (ver. 26, 27.)

[*k*] Where he mentions, particularly in the last verse, *the milk of the goats*, and of no other creature: because they had abundance of them, and their milk was in daily use, both for meat and for medicine. And for medicine the ancients preferred it before all other, as most moderate and temperate. So Galen and Paulus Ægineta; the last of which writes thus: "Woman's milk is the most temperate of all other; next to that goats; and next to that ass's; then sheep; and lastly, cow's milk." From whence it was (Bochartus conjectures, who hath heaped up a great deal on this subject, lib. ii. de Sac. Animal. cap. *ult.* par. i.) Jupiter, a king in Crete about Abraham's time (and looked upon afterward as the greatest god), is said to have been nourished by a goat: that is, by the best of nourishments.

Ver. 1. *BOAST not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*] Be not so confident of thy present power, riches, or any thing else, as to grow presumptuous, and brag what thou wilt do or enjoy hereafter: for thou canst not be secure of this very day (wherein thou makest such large promises to thyself of the future), which may produce something, for any thing thou knowest, that shall spoil all thy designs, and frustrate all thy expectations, which thou hast for to-morrow. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*] Be not so blinded with self-love, as to praise thyself; which is both indecent and imprudent, for others will only the more undervalue thee: but take care to do praiseworthy things, which will force commendations even from strangers and foreigners, who cannot be thought too partial to thee; for this will make thee truly honourable.

Ver. 3. *A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.*] We feel there is heaviness in a stone, and that a bag of sand is a weighty load; but neither of them is so intolerable as the effects of a fool's wrath, which cannot be shaken off so soon as they may be: for he cannot easily be appeased by us, nor can he moderate himself; till his anger hath carried him to the most barbarous cruelty. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 4. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?*] And yet envy is still worse than this; for though in a fury a man hath no pity, but is transported by his violent passion beyond all bounds (like an inundation of waters), yet his wrath appearing openly, it may be avoided, and in time it is composed and allayed; nay, perhaps he repents of it: but *envy* (or a *desire of revenge*) is a lurking evil, which increases daily without remorse; and is more exasperated by time, till it finds some means or other to do the mischief it desires.

Ver. 5. *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*] He that takes an ingenuous liberty to tell others plainly of their faults, and rebuke them freely, when need requires, to their face, is a better friend, and more valuable (though perhaps he pleases them less), than he that hath more of the passion of love in his heart, but makes it not known by such good effects. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 6. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend: but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*] Just reproofs, though never so smart and severe from one that loves us, ought to be thankfully accepted, because they proceed from his care of us, and fidelity to us; but the most tender expressions of kindness from an enemy ought to be suspected to be false and treacherous; especially when he heaps them upon us in great abundance, and with such earnestness and seeming passion, that we had need to pray him to forbear, and pray God to preserve us from being too credulous. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 7. *The full soul loatheth a honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.*] As hunger makes men relish the most distasteful food, when full stomachs

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loath the most delightful: so poverty hath this advantage of plenty, that it disposes men to be thankful for the smallest blessings, though mixed with care and trouble; when the richer sort, if they be not very careful, are apt to be unsatisfied with, nay, to nauseate, their most delicious enjoyments, upon which they have a long time surfeited.

Ver. 8. *As a bird that wandereth from her nest; so is a man that wandereth from his place.*] Men seldom change for the better; but as a bird that forsakes its nest exposes itself to danger, and cannot easily settle again: so he whose levity, or discontent, makes him rashly leave his country, or trade, or office, wherein he was well placed, too often undoes himself, but rarely mends his condition. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 9. *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.*] As balsam and fragrant perfumes marvellously refresh and comfort the natural spirits when they droop and are tired: so doth the very presence of a true-hearted friend, and much more his faithful counsel, rejoice a man's soul; especially when he is at such a loss, that he knows not how to advise himself.

Ver. 10. *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother afar off.*] Forsake not therefore a friend, whom thou, or thy father before thee, hath tried and found sincere; but betake thyself to him when thou art in distress, rather than to thy natural brother or kinsman, if he be not also thy friend: and above all other, choose a friend near thee, if it be possible; for as a man that is closely joined unto us in near affection, is better than one of our nearest kindred, whose heart is not knit to us; so a good neighbour near at hand, is better than eithe friend or brother who is so far off that we may perish before he comes to our assistance.

Ver. 11. *My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.*] My dear child, if thou hast any love for him, that was the instrument of giving thee a being, let such precepts as these make thee wise and good: which will both give me the highest joy, and furnish me with an answer unto such, as are apt to object tho child's miscarriages to want of care in his parents.

Ver. 12. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*] He whose long experience and observation of things have made him cautious and circumspect, foreseeing a calamity before it comes, withdraws himself in good time from the danger, into a place of safety; but inconsiderate and credulous persons are so easily abused by crafty men, that they not only quite overlook the mischief which even they intend against them, and go on securely in their accustomed track till it overtakes them; but make haste to fall into it, notwithstanding any caution that is given them.

Ver. 13. *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.*] It is a great weakness to trust him who is so rash, as to be bound for one whose ability and honesty are utterly unknown to him; especially for a woman whose way of life makes her credit justly suspected: therefore have nothing to do with such an inconsiderate person; without the utmost security that he can give thee for the payment of what he owes thee.

Ver. 14. *He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.*] He that spends all his time in nothing else but proclaiming his praises extravagantly, who hath bestowed great benefits upon him, disparages rather than commends his benefactor; in doing so much for a base flatterer: who magnifying rather his own deserts than the other's bounty, incurs hereafter his just displeasure. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 15. *A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.*] He is in an ill case, the roof of whose house is so ruinous, that in a very rainy day, when he shall be wet if he go abroad, cannot be dry at home: and he is no better that hath a scolding wife, who torments him herself if he stay at home; and makes him tormented with the jeers of others if he go abroad.

Ver. 16. *Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.*] For it is altogether as impossible for him to keep the wind from blowing, and from being heard when it blows; or to enclose a fragrant perfume in his hand, so that it shall not be smelt; as to make her hold her tongue, or to conceal her bawling humour, which she herself proclaims. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 17. *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*] As nothing is more natural, so nothing is more powerful, than society: for as iron is sharpened and brightened by iron, so one wit whets another, one friend encourages and cheers another; nay, all sorts of passions are stirred up, and men are made either good or bad by mutual conversation. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 18. *Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof; so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.*] As he that diligently looks after the fig-tree (especially whilst it is young and tender), and preserves it from suffering by drought, by vermin, or by wild beasts, &c. shall at last eat of its pleasant fruit; so he that faithfully defends his master's person or reputation, and takes care his estate be not wasted, shall, in due time, be largely rewarded by him for his integrity.

Ver. 19. *As in water face answereth to face; so the heart of man to man.*] The inclinations and designs of other men appear as plainly to the mind of those that are wise, as their faces appear to themselves in the water: where, as every man will find such a countenance represented to him (whether sour or smiling) as he brings when he looks into it; so he ought to expect no other affections from others, but such as he expresseth towards them. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 20. *Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*] The appetite of man is as insatiable as his eyes, which still desire some new sight: and are as far from being filled with all that they have seen, as the infernal places with all the souls they have received; or the grave with all the bodies it hath devoured.

Ver. 21. *As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.*] As gold and silver are tried by putting them into the fire; which discovers whether they be pure or adulterate: so a man is discovered what he is, by trying how he can bear praises, commendations, and great applauses; which will presently shew either the virtue or the vanity of his mind. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 22. *Though thou should bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*] The folly and wickedness of some men are so

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incurable, that though, unto reproofs, and chidings, and threatenings, you should add stripes and blows; nay, beat and knock them, like wheat in a mortar; bruising their bodies (as we speak) till they are black and blue, they would not grow a whit the wiser or the better for it.

Ver. 23. *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.*] Whether thou be a private person or a prince, let me advise thee to look after thy business thyself; and not to trust merely to thy servants and ministers: but go sometimes and take an exact survey of the state of thy affairs; and more particularly make it part of thy care to visit thy flocks and thy herds, and know in what case they are. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 24. *For riches are not for ever; and doth the crown endure to every generation?*] For as no riches are so durable as these, which increase and multiply continually, so the greatest estate, even in these, unless it be well managed, will in time be brought to nothing: nay, the crown itself will not continue to many generations, without due care to preserve its revenue; of which these ought to be thought the best and most lasting portion.

Ver. 25. *The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.*] For the maintenance of which the earth brings forth plentifully, without any more pains of thine, than only in the spring-time to drive the flocks and herds into pastures; and to look after them, when the earth brings forth grass and young herbs for their food; and to gather hay in due season, which even the mountains afford, for their fodder and winter provision.

Ver. 26. *The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of thy field.*] And if thou takest care to preserve them, they will preserve thee: for the sheep and the lambs will afford thee wool to make thee clothes; and with the price of thy goats thou mayest purchase a field for the sowing of corn to make thee bread.

Ver. 27. *And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance of thy maidens.*] And both of them, especially the goats, will yield thee milk enough for thy own food, and for the sustenance of all thy family, both men-servants and maidens; who may hence be provided with all things necessary for their livelihood. See Arg. [*k*]

CHAP. XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter consists, as the foregoing did, of several mixed observations: some belonging to the concerns of private persons, others to the public.

[*a*] It begins with the difference between a good and a bad conscience, which discovers itself, when there is any danger, of which men are apprehensive. And in the next verse, he observes the difference between a nation when it is bad and when it is good; when its manners are depraved, they fall into confusion; and when they grow better (for most interpreters take the word *Adam* in the latter part of the verse *collectively*, for the body of the people), then they keep their government, and live happily. Especially when they have a wise and prudent prince; who is here also to be understood in opposition to *many princes*, either together or successively; by whom a nation is miserably harassed, when its wickedness brings upon it such a punishment. So Melancthon understands, ver. 2. "The complaints (saith he) are very usual concerning the negligence of princes, their exactions, oppressions, want of care to administer justice, &c. and the people still accuse them and their court: but God accuses both princes and people; and for the sins of the people, he gives them ill governors; as Solomon here teaches, that for the transgression of a country, *i. e.* both of prince and people, *many are the princes thereof:* that is, *none reign long;* or *many reign together,* opposing and thrusting out one another. Now for the cure of this he gives a singular admonition, necessary both for prince and people, which is this: that *a prudent and wise man makes empire durable.* That is, a wise prince will sometime depart from his own right to quiet things, and suffer some inconveniences to prevent greater: as Fabius and Cicero did. And on the other side, people are to be advised, lest they draw greater mischiefs upon themselves by seditious counsels than those which they study to remedy."

[*b*] And there is none greater he seems to tell us in the next verse, (ver. 3.) than when power comes into the hands of a beggarly fellow; who is void of all humanity, and forgets even what he himself was, and all the miseries of poverty, which he perpetuates upon them who are poor already. So Maldonate (and he alone, I think) expounds that phrase *veen lechem, and there is no food,* to signify, *before the corn be grown out of the earth:* and by the *sweeping rain,* understands not such rain as beats out the corn when it is in the ear, but which washes away the seed before it springs up. Even so he that spoils the poor, takes away from them, after a manner, what they have not; and extirpates the very seeds of future riches, which he deprives them of all means of gathering. Upon which subject the Lord Bacon hath discoursed very ingeniously in his eighth book of the Advancement of Learning, chap. 2. parab. 24. "This parable (saith he) was by the ancients expressed and shadowed forth under the fable of *two horse-leeches;* one full and the other hungry. For oppression, coming from the poor and necessitous person, is far more grievous than that of the rich and the full; because it seeks out all tricks for exactions, and leaves no corner unsearched where money may be found. This kind of oppression was wont also to be resembled to *sponges,* which being dry suck in strongly, but not so being moist. And the parable comprehends in it a profitable instruction, both to princes and to people. To princes, *that they commit not the government of provinces or offices of charge to indigent and indebted persons:* and to the people, *that they suffer not their kings to struggle with too much want.*"

But none have glossed better upon this place, than an excellent prelate of ours, Bishop Sanderson, in his sermon upon Prov. xxiv. 10, 11. where he discourses to this effect: "That it is in matter of *power,* as it is in matter of *learning.* They that have but a smattering of scholarship, it is observed, are the forwardest to make ostentation of the few scraps they have, for fear there should be no notice taken of their learning, if they should not shew it when they can; and yet then they do it so untowardly, that when they think most of all to shew their scholar-

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ship, they most of all, by some gross mistake or other, betray ignorance. Even just so it is in the case of power, when men of base spirits and condition have gotten a little of it into their hands; who conceive their neighbours will not be sensible what goodly men they are, if they do not, by some act or other, shew forth their power to the world: but having minds too narrow to comprehend any brave and generous way to do it; they cannot frame to do it by any other means, than by trampling upon those that are below them; which they do beyond all reason and without any mercy."

Which he illustrates very handsomely upon 1 Sam. xii. 3. "If a mean man (says he) in any of our towns or hamlets, be a little gotten up to overtop most of his neighbours in wealth; or to be put into some small authority, to deal under some great man for the disposing his farms or grounds; or have something to sell to his necessitous neighbour, who must buy upon that day; or have a little money lying by him to furnish another; who, to supply his present needs, must sell off somewhat of that little he hath, though at an under rate; or the like: it is scarce credible (did not every day's experience make proof of it) how such a man will screw up the poor wretch that falls into his hand, &c. *conclude hence, all ye that are of generous births and spirits, how unworthy that practice would be in you;* wherein men of the lowest minds and conditions can, in their proportion, not only equal, but even exceed you: *which should make you not only to hate oppression, because it is wicked; but even to scorn it, because it is base.*"

[c] After this follow several bad characters of other men: and among the rest of him that oppresses his brother by *usury* and *increase*, ver. 8. where these two words, *neschech* and *tarbith*, do not seem to signify greater extortion, and more moderate gain. For all usury is *neschech*, as it respects the debtor of whom it is taken; and *tarbith*, in respect of the creditor who is the gainer by it; whether it be great or less, that the one gives and the other receives. If there be any other difference between these two, it either lies in this, that there were several sorts of usury whereby men increased their estates; or the one signifies the advantage men made of their money, and the other the advantage they made of their goods. About which I do not think fit to trouble the reader any farther: nor to examine whether their opinion be true, who say, *the king was to take away their unjust gain, and give it to better men.* I have left that undetermined, whether God or man should punish the usurer, but have expressed all that the law forbids in this case, which was to take interest (as we speak) of their *brethren*, especially of their *poor* brethren, which some think are only meant; but I have contented myself to say, are *principally* meant.

[d] And in the next verse but two, (ver. 11.) he observes that such men as grow rich, though it be by fraud and oppression, are apt to have a mighty conceit of their own wisdom: which understanding men, though never so poor, see through, and discern to be, at best, but craft: and many times to be no more than that, which we call purse-pride, when they have no more wit but just to save and hoard up money. Upon which place some observe that Solomon secretly intimates riches to be an impediment to wisdom; and poverty a great advantage: because the one is apt to blow men up into a vain opinion of themselves; and the other to make them humble and modest: the former of which is the greatest enemy, and the latter the best friend, to wisdom. Certain it is, that money having so large a command, as to be able to purchase not only dignity, but great veneration, from the multitude; they that have it are apt to look no farther neither for wisdom nor virtue: which made a confidant to Cæsar (as the Lord Bacon observes) give him this counsel, that if he would restore the decayed state of the Roman commonwealth, he must by all means take away the estimation of wealth: "for these (saith he) and all other evils, together with the reputation of money, shall cease; if neither public offices, nor any other dignities, which commonly are coveted, be exposed to sale." And the truth is, saith that Lord, (Advanc. of Learn. book i.) as it was rightly said, that *blushing is the colour of virtue*, though sometime it come from vice; so we may truly affirm that *poverty is the fortune of virtue*, though sometime it may proceed from misgovernment and improvidence. And he adds farther, that "the magnificence of princes and great men had long since turned into barbarism and rudeness, if the poverty of learning had not kept up civility and decency of life."

[e] For bad princes, Solomon shews, ver. 12. bring great contempt and misery upon a nation, as bad men (ver. 13. 14.) bring mischief upon themselves. But no princes are more grievous to their subjects, than such as are needy, and yet have no goodness. So I understand, with the LXX. ver. 15. where that word we render *raging* is well translated by the Vulgar a *hungry bear*, as Bochartus hath shewn.

[f] Who also seems to me to have expressed the sense of the next verse most fully; when he observes, that, according to the manner of the Hebrew language, there is something wanting in one part of the verse, which is to be supplied out of the other. As when the Psalmist saith in Psal. lxxxiv. 11. "One day in thy courts, is better than a thousand;" he means *elsewhere, out of his courts.* And Psal. xci. 7. "A thousand shall fall on thy side (viz. *the left hand*), and ten thousand on thy right hand." In like manner we are to understand this verse, as if he had said: A prince that wants understanding, and is a great oppressor, shall shorten his days: but he that hates covetousness shall prolong them. (See parab. 1. de Animal. Sac. lib. iii. cap. 25.)

[g] In the two next verses I have endeavoured to connect several senses together; as he that examines them will perceive. And in ver. 21. have taken some notice of the Lord Bacon's observation; that men may be bribed by something else besides money, to pervert justice: and more commonly by other respects than by that. His words are these: (book viii. Advanc. of Learn. chap. 2. parab. 23.) "Easiness of humour in a judge, is more pernicious than the corruption of bribes. For all persons do not give bribes; but there is hardly any cause, wherein somewhat may not be found, that may incline the mind of the judge, if respect of persons lead him. For one man shall be respected as his countryman, another as an ill-tongued man, another as a rich man, another as a favourite, another as commended by a friend;

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to conclude, all is full of iniquity where respect of persons bears sway: and for a very slight matter, as it were for a bit of bread, judgment is perverted.

[*h*] The rest of the chapter contains plain observations, concerning several sorts of good and bad men: and concludes with the repetition of a remark he had made before, (ver. 12.) about the state of public affairs; which are then in an ill condition, when bad men get into authority. For virtuous men begin then to be so ill treated, that they fly or hide themselves; to avoid the abuses which they see will be put upon them. This the LXX. suggest, when they translate the first clause of the verse thus; *In places where the impious bear sway, the righteous sigh and groan; i. e.* some are imprisoned, and sent into obscurity, by the unjust prosecution of the wicked; and others obscure themselves, and groan in secret under those oppressions, till there be a turn of affairs (which Solomon here intimates they may expect in due time) by the fall of those wicked persons, and the preferment of better: which invites virtuous men to appear again; and by the countenance they then receive, to propagate piety among the people: who are so ready to conform themselves to the example of their governors, that there is no blessing we should pray for so earnestly as this; especially when the days are evil. Then that saying of the son of Sirach should be perpetually in every good man's mind, to support and comfort him; when he is constrained, perhaps, to lie hid and conceal himself to avoid trouble and danger, "The power of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and in due time he will set over it one that is profitable," Ecclus. x. 4. read the foregoing verses.

Ver. 1. *THE wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.*] An evil conscience makes men timorous and cowardly, like a faint-hearted soldier who runs away at the appearance of an enemy, and never so much as looks back to see whether he pursue him: but men of integrity are not easily affrighted; but proceed like a young lion, with an undaunted resolution, even in hazardous undertakings.

Ver. 2. *For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.*] There are many mischiefs that people draw upon themselves by their wickedness, and this especially—that falling into factions, every one thinks himself fit to govern; and throwing down one ruler after another, they can come to no settlement, till they grow better and more considerate: and then, some truly prudent and pious person arises, who takes the right course to heal these breaches, and prolong the government in peace and tranquillity. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 3. *A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.*] But there is none more wicked and intolerable than a needy fellow that is got into power; but hath lost all sense of the miseries of the poor, whom he squeezes and spoils, like a violent rain, which, instead of refreshing the corn, as gentle showers do, beats it down and lays it so flat, that it can never recover; but a famine comes upon the land. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 4. *They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.*] From such a man there is none so wicked but he shall receive encouragement; for they that make not the law of God their rule, but their own lusts, will employ and promote the vilest person, and find something or other to commend him for: but they that resolutely observe God's law, are so far from approving such a wicked wretch, that they oppose him; and declare, as we say, open war against him.

Ver. 5. *Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.*] For the minds of men that give up themselves to wickedness are so depraved, that sometime they do not so much as understand, and at no time regard, the difference between right and wrong; much less the difference that God doth and will make between them: but men piously affected understand and consider all things of this nature so exactly, that they are careful not to offend in the least against their neighbour.

Ver. 6. *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*] An honest, upright man, that acts sincerely in all that he doth, though he be never so poor, is far happier, and more useful and commendable, than a crafty person, that knows how to wind and turn himself every way; though by his fraud and tricks he grow never so rich and great. (See xix. 1.)

Ver. 7. *Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.*] He that studies the law of God, and observes the rules of sobriety and temperance, and other virtues, which it prescribes, is likely to prove a wise son, in whom his parents may find comfort: but he that had rather go into merry company, than into the school of the wise, and there spend his time and his money in sensual pleasures, is a shame, as well as a vexation to them.

Ver. 8. *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*] He that increases his estate by usury, for the money or goods which he lends to his poor brother, (contrary to the laws provided in that case, Exod. xxii. 24. Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.) shall not be able to make his family so great as he intended; but those riches shall be translated into some other hands, which will exercise that charity which he neglected. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*] He that refuses to hearken unto God and to obey his laws, deceives himself, if he think by his prayers to please him, and make an amends for his crimes; for God will be so far from hearkening unto him, that he will abominate such prayers as tend to nothing but to make God a partner with him in his sins.

Ver. 10. *Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.*] He that studies by false suggestions, and deceitful representations, to seduce upright men into dangerous practices, shall fall himself irrecoverably into that very mischief which he designed for them: while they, preserving their integrity, shall remain not only safe, but in a flourishing condition.

Ver. 11. *The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.*] A man whose labours and cares have such success that he grows very rich, and is courted and complimented by every body, is apt to fancy himself much wiser than other men: but when a man of mean condition, who applies himself more

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to understand the value of things than to get riches, comes to discourse with him; he easily discovers, and makes it appear, that he is but a fool. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 12. *When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.*] When the righteous are advanced to places of trust and authority, there is excessive joy among all virtuous men; and the whole kingdom feels the happy effects of it, in beautiful order, peace, security, and plenty, at home; and in the honour and reputation it hath abroad: but when the wicked get up into power, it makes a rueful change, being wholly employed in finding reasons to ruin others: whose safety then lies in concealing themselves in their estate. (See ver. 28.)

Ver. 13. *He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*] He that studies to hide and extenuate rather than to leave his sins, shall be so far from escaping by his impudent denial, that he shall make himself obnoxious to severer punishments: but he that ingenuously acknowledges he hath done amiss, and not only promises to do so no more, but gives some proof of his amendment, shall obtain pardon both from God and man.

Ver. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.*] From which happiness if he would not relapse, let him constantly preserve a pious fear and dread of God and of his displeasure in his mind, and be cautious and circumspect in all his actions: for if he be presumptuously confident and careless, and, because God is so gracious, regard neither his commands nor his threatenings; he will fall back into deeper guilt and misery.

Ver. 15. *As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the people.*] A lion and a bear are not more dreadful to the weaker beasts, especially when hunger presses them to seek a prey, than a needy prince, who fears not God and loves not man, is to the poorer sort: who have not wherewithal to fill his insatiable desires; and yet are the surest to be invaded, because the least able to resist his power. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 16. *The prince that wanteth understanding, is also a great oppressor, but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.*] But it is very great ignorance not only of religion, but of all things else, that makes a prince grievously oppress and pillage his people; which makes his reign short, as well as unhappy: when he that, hating such exactions, is kind to his subjects, prolongs his days in much tranquillity. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 17. *A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.*] He that murders a man, and, pressed with the weight of his guilt, or pursued by the avenger of blood, flies to save himself, shall never think himself safe; but lead a restless life to his very grave: for all men looking upon him as a common enemy, shall refuse to succour him: no, though they see him falling headlong into a pit which he is not aware of, they shall not stop him, but let him perish.

Ver. 18. *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.*] There is no such way to be safe, as to be honest and sincere in all a man's words and actions; for he that endeavours to preserve himself by fraud and deceit, though he can wind, and turn, and hath several shifts he thinks to save himself by, yet in one or other of them he shall perish: for the time will come, when he will blindly choose the wrong course; and commonly when he begins to fall, he sinks utterly, and cannot possibly recover himself.

Ver. 19. *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.*] He that is a good husband in the management of his estate, shall have the satisfaction of Providence sufficiently, if not plentifully, for himself and his family: but he that is careless, and follows the courses of loose and wicked companions, can reap no other fruit of his negligence, but the most miserable want and beggary.

Ver. 20. *A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.*] He that is true to his word, and just in all his dealings, shall have abundance of blessings from God, and be well spoken of by men: but he whose eager desires make him heap up wealth, by right or by wrong, brings such guilt upon himself, as makes him execrable unto both.

Ver. 21. *To have respect of persons is not good; for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress.*] It is a wicked thing in a judge to incline to consider the quality of the person, and not the merits of the cause that is brought before him: for though, perhaps, at the first he could not be corrupted under a great sum of money, yet, having accustomed himself to it, he will at last sell his sentence at the lowest rates; nay, be moved by the smallest considerations to forsake the rules which ought to guide him. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 22. *He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*] An envious, covetous wretch, that cannot look upon what another hath without grudging, is pushed on, by his impatient desires, to get riches, without making any distinction between good and evil: never considering, in that disturbance of mind wherein he lives, that all may be gone in a moment; and he then stand in need of the mercy of those whom he would not pity.

Ver. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.*] He that rebukes a man for his evil courses may displease him, nay, anger him at the first: but when he considers that he could have no other end in it but his good, he will have a greater kindness for such a man, than for one that humours him in every thing; and with flattering words soothes him up in those faults, which he ought to take the freedom to reprehend.

Ver. 24. *Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.*] He that lays hands upon all that he can rap and rend from his father or mother, and thinks it no sin, or no great one, (pretending they keep him too short, and have no need of it themselves, or do not use it, &c.) not only keeps the company of spendthrifts; but is wicked enough to be a highwayman, and murder others to feed his own luxury.

Ver. 25. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.*] A man of a proud and insolent spirit, of ambitious and vast desires, is never quiet; but as he lives in perpetual quarrels, so hath no satisfaction in what he enjoys; nay,

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many times wastes it all in suits and contentions: but he who, confiding in the good providence of the Almighty, hath a humble and contented mind, lives peaceably with others, and comfortably within himself; nay, thrives many times and abounds with plenty of all good things.

Ver. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*] He that relies wholly upon his own judgment is like to miscarry; because he follows the conduct of a fool: but he that, distrusting himself, takes good advice and follows it, escapes many mischiefs, into which the other rashly runs; and is delivered out of many dangers, in which the other perishes.

Ver. 27. *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.*] He that relieves those that are in want, shall be so far from wanting himself, that he shall thereby procure God's blessing to increase his estate: but he that regards not the miseries of others, nor is willing so much as to know them, for fear of having his compassion moved towards them, shall draw upon himself the curse of God as well as men; and fall into many and grievous misfortunes.

Ver. 28. *When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.*] When wicked men are advanced unto power and authority, they favouring such only as are like to themselves, it makes good men scarce; who are forced to withdraw, and hide themselves from their tyranny; but when they perish (as they shall at last), and good men come in their place, then the righteous openly shew themselves; and the number of them increase by their example, and by the encouragement they enjoy under righteous governors. See Arg. [*h*]

CHAP. XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] This chapter concludes the collection of Proverbs, made by the *men of Hezekiah;* and contains more advices proper to a prince (as he was) than any of the rest: but ushers them in with a general admonition, how dangerous it is not to profit by reproofs or corrections (such as he and his people had by the hand of Sennacherib), which when they work upon men's spirits there is some hope of them: but when they become refractory, inflexible, and obstinately reject them, they are near to a final destruction. This wicked temper of mind he expresses by hardening the *neck;* which is a metaphor, as Bochartus truly observes, (lib. iii. de Sacris Animal. cap. 41. par. ii.) taken from *oxen*, who being put forward draw back and withdraw their necks and shoulders from the yoke: and sometimes are so headstrong and stiff-necked, that they cannot be brought to submit to it: unto which the Scriptures often allude, both in the Old Testament and the New: for instance, Exod. xxxii. 9. Acts vii. 51. And hither belong those expressions, Isa. xlviii. 4. where he saith his people had an *iron sinew*, &c. and that in Jer. v. 5. where he saith they *had broken the yoke and burst the bands.*

[*b*] Then follows a tacit admonition unto princes, to be good, by describing the happiness which a nation then enjoys: which they had noted twice before in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 12. 28.) but thought it so considerable and so needful, that they insert it here again; and the latter part of it once more, (ver. 16.) being a famous observation of his father David, Psal. xii. 9. where he takes notice how the wicked flourish, and go about confidently into every place, nay, take the liberty to do as they list, when men of no account are exalted to power: who take no care to oppose growing wickedness, and to keep every man within the bounds of his duty.

[*c*] And after an admonition (ver. 3.) that the study of wisdom is the only preservative against the lusts of uncleanness; which, in the preface to this book as it is observed, destroy abundance of young men, and their estates also (for lust is very blind and very prodigal); the next observation (ver. 4.) is concerning kings again: where *isch terumoth*, which we translate *a man that receiveth gifts*, is in the Hebrew phrase *a man of oblations.* For so the word *terumoth* always signifies, throughout the whole Bible, *the heave-offerings* which were offered to God: which would make one think that *isch terumoth (a man of heave-offerings)* signifies here *a prince that is sacrilegious*, and robs the church of its proper goods: or, if we will not take it in that strict sense, it denotes one that will suffer himself to be pacified by gifts, and bribed to wink at the most enormous crimes, which he ought to have severely punished: or, that is so unjust as to find fault, perhaps, with the most innocent persons, on purpose that they may appease him, offering him a part of their estate to save all the rest: one or other of these is the most literal exposition of the words. But I have contented myself with the LXX. (who render it παράνομος) to use only general expressions in the Paraphrase which include all these, and whatsoever else that is contrary to the duty of his office. Rabbi Solomon doth not differ much from the sense of the LXX. when he translates it *a proud man*, who heaves and lifts up himself in his own thoughts, imagining he is above all laws, and not bound to observe them.

[*d*] In the next verse (ver. 5.) I have not wholly neglected the sense of the LXX. who refer the last clause to the flatterer himself: who cannot escape the hatred of those whom he hath ruined by his pernicious praises, or base compliances, with all their humours, &c. which is more fully expressed in the following sentence, (ver. 6.) where I have interpreted one part of the verse by the other.

[*e*] And then seems to follow again a double admonition to princes, or those that govern under them. First, not through laziness, or contempt to refuse to examine a poor man's complaint, and do him right, (ver. 7.) Secondly, not through profaneness, pride, or carelessness, to scorn admonition; especially any warning that is given of danger, &c. (ver. 8.) For when he says "the righteous considers the cause of the poor," he seems to mean a *righteous prince*, or *judge* (and so I have explained it in the Paraphrase): for who else is to consider of the *din* (as it is in the Hebrew), the cause of the poor which is to be judged? None but they, and the advocates who are to plead it: all which persons are obliged, in conscience, to search into the truth of things; not to be sparing of their pains (though matters be intricate, though the labour be like to be long, though they shall get nothing by it) to find out the bottom of a business: which he that refuses to do, nay, perhaps rejects the complaint of the poor, or beats them off with big words; or, out of the hardness of

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his heart, or the love of ease, or fear of great men, or any other respect, will not give them audience, or not consider and redress their grievance; Solomon pronounces him a *wicked*, an *impious* person; and accordingly God will proceed against him.

[*f*] Such men, indeed, may scorn these threatenings, nay, laugh at them: but thereby they will endanger the bringing all things into confusion; as Solomon observes in the succeeding words, (ver. 8.) where *men of scorn* (as it is in the Hebrew) signify such as mock at religion, and at all things that are serious: whom the LXX. call ἄνομοι, *lawless, pestilent* men; that regard neither God nor man, but only their own wicked humour: which brings the kingdom or place where they live into the greatest danger. Which we express by the word *ensnare*, and other translations by words of the import: which I have expressed in the Paraphrase, but shall not mention here, because I would leave room to insert the most admirable discourse of the Lord Bacon upon this verse. "It may seem strange," saith he, (book viii. Advanc. of Learn. chap. 2. parab. 12.) "that in the description of men, made and framed, as it were, by nature to the ruin and destruction of a state, Solomon hath chosen the character, not of a *proud* and *insolent* man, not of a *tyrannical* and *cruel*, not of a *rash* and *violent*, not of an *impious* and *lewd*, not of an *unjust* and *oppressive*, not of a *seditious* and *turbulent*, not of an *incontinent* and *voluptuous*, no, nor of a *foolish* and *unable* person; but of a *scorner*. But this is a judgment most worthy the wisdom of that great king, who best knew the causes of the preservation or subversion of a state. For there is not commonly the like plague unto kingdoms and commonwealths, as when counsellors, or senators, and such as sit at the helm of government, are by nature *scorners*. For, first, such persons, that they may win the reputation of undaunted statesmen, do ever extenuate the greatness of dangers; and insult over those who give them their just weight, as timorous and faint-hearted people. Secondly, they scoff at all mature delays, and meditated debatings of matters by consultations and deliberation, as a thing too much tasting of an oratory vein, and full of tediousness; but nothing conducing to the sum and issue of business. Thirdly, as for fame, at which a prince's counsels should especially level, they contemn it as the *spittle of the vulgar*, and a thing that will quickly be blown over. Fourthly, the power and authority of laws they regard not at all, but look upon them as cobwebs, that ought not to stop matters of consequence. Fifthly, counsels and precautions, foreseeing of events afar off, they reject as mere dreams and melancholy apprehensions. Sixthly, men truly prudent, and well seen in affairs, of great resolution and counsel, they defame with gibes and jests. In a word, they do at once overturn all the foundations of civil government: which is the more to be attended, because they secretly undermine it, and do not assault it by open force. And it is a practice which is not yet so suspected among men as it deserves."

[*g*] The latter end of the next verse, (ver. 9.) some refer to the *fool*, others to the *wise man*. They that refer to the fool understood it two ways, much to the same purpose. Some thus, The fool will always be angry or deride, so that the wise man cannot put in a word; others thus, The wise man shall be either irritated, or derided by the fool perpetually. As much as to say, He shall get nothing, if he contend with a fool, but either to be derided or provoked to anger by him. This I have taken some notice of in my Paraphrase: but the other being the most common opinion, that he speaks of the way of a wise man's dealing with a fool, I have principally regarded. And the Lord Bacon hath made this pertinent reflection upon it, (in the forenamed book and place, parab. 3.) which it will be profitable to set down here. "It is accounted a wise rule, *not to contend with our betters:* but it is a no less useful admonition, which Solomon here gives us, *not to contend with a worthless person;* whom we cannot meddle withal, but upon disadvantageous terms. *For to overcome, is no victory; but to be conquered, a foul disgrace.* And it is all one, in the management of his contention, whether we deal sometime *in a jesting* way with him, and sometime in a way of *disdain and scorn*. For which way soever we turn, we shall come off with the loss of our credit, and not be able handsomely to disengage ourselves. But the worst of all is, when the person with whom we contend hath *something of the fool* in him (as Solomon speaks): that is, if he be both *witless* and *wilful:* have some *heart* but no *brain*."

[*h*] The tenth verse I have expounded of a *magistrate*, that hath the courage to make inquisition after and prosecute notorious offenders: and, in the latter part of it, have put two senses together. As I have done also in the next, (ver. 11.) where the word *ruach, spirit*, being differently interpreted, hath produced several expositions. For some take it to signify *anger;* others to signify *words*, or the *sense of the mind*. They that take it for *anger*, expound it thus: *A fool shews all his anger immediately, but a wise man keeps it in, till he hath a fitting opportunity to express it most to purpose.* If we understand it of *words*, the sense is; *A fool blurts out every thing that comes in his head, but a wise man speaks only as much as is necessary.* If it signify the *sense of the mind*, then this is the meaning, *A fool utters all that he knows; but a wise man conceals many things.* But the great person beforenamed, (in the same chapter, parab. 15.) thinks none of these hit the mark. "For this parable (saith he) corrects principally, not the *futility of vain men*, who utter easily as well what ought to be kept secret, as what may be spoken; nor *the bold liberty* of such as, without discretion and judgment, fly upon all men and upon all matters; nor *talkativeness*, which troubles others even to a surfeit; but another vice more close and retired, *viz.* that ill government of discourse which of all other is not prudent and politic. And that is, when a man so orders his discourse, in private conferences, as whatsoever is in his mind which he conceives any way pertinent to his purpose, out it comes at once, and as it were in one birth, and in a continued speech. This is that which doth much prejudice business. For, first, a speech broken off by interlocutions, and instilled by parts, penetrates deeper than that which is continued: because that in a continued discourse the weight of things is not precisely and distinctly taken; nor by some convenient pauses suffered to fix: but one reason drives out another, before it be thoroughly settled

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in the mind of the hearer. Secondly, there is no man master of such powerful and happy eloquence, as to be able, at the very first dash, as we speak, to strike him *dumb and altogether speechless*, with whom he discourses: but he will have something to answer, and perhaps to object, on the other side. And then it falls out that those things, which should have been reserved for replication and refutation, being disclosed already and tasted beforehand by this unadvised anticipation, quite lose their strength and their grace. Thirdly, if a man do not pour out all he hath to say at once, but deliver himself by parcels; now one thing, and anon casting in another: he shall perceive by the looks and the answer of him, with whom he discourses, how every particular passage affects him, and what acceptance it finds with him: so as what is yet remaining to be spoken, he may with the greater caution, either suppress, or select what is to his purpose." Thus that great person: who herein hath followed the LXX. who express the sense, rather than translate the words, in this manner; *A man void of understanding brings out his whole mind, but a wise man dispenses it part by part.*

[*i*] The like observation he makes upon the next verse, (ver. 12.) where by *lies* or *words of falsehood* (as the Hebrew hath it), the LXX. truly understand λόγον ἄδικον, *an unjust report*, that hurts our neighbour by calumnies, or false accusations; (as the word commonly signifies in Scripture, particularly Psal. lii.) unto which, if a ruler lend his ear, he will never want lewd informers, or rather slanderers, in his court to work upon that inclination. Melancthon hath observed upon this verse, that the *love of lies* (as he translates it) comprehends a great many vices; according as there are divers sorts of lies: which are all repugnant to that eminent virtue of *truth*, in which a prince ought to excel, viz. *vanity* or *perfidiousness, breach of promises, calumnies, suspicions, sophistry;* which defends bad causes by colourable pretences to please great men; and persuades the prince, by plausible arguments, that he is tied to no rules: unto any of which, if a prince be inclined, his ministers will not fail to make him break his word perpetually, to abuse him with false stories, to infuse into his mind unjust suspicions; and to find colour for any thing, though never so wicked: of all which he gives examples.

But none hath opened this parable comparably to the Lord Bacon, in the place beforementioned, (parab. 13.) "Where he takes it for an easy credulous temper in a prince, to believe detractors and sycophants without examination. From whence proceeds such a pestilential breath, as infects and corrupts all his servants. For some of them feel out the *fears* and *jealousies* of the prince, and increase them by fictitious tales; others awake and stir up the furies of *envy;* especially against all those that are best deserving in the state: others seek to wash away their own guilt, and the stain of a foul conscience, by defaming better men: others promote the suits of their friends, and their preferments, by traducing and debasing the merit of their competitors: others compass fabulous representations of their enemies, as if they were upon a stage; and innumerable such-like. And these are the arts of such of the prince's servants, as are of a more wicked disposition. As for those, who are by nature better inclined, and by education more civilized, when they perceive their innocence to be no safe sanctuary (their prince not knowing how to distinguish between truth and falsehood), they put off the probity of their manners, and accommodate themselves also to the air of the court, and are carried about therewith in a servile manner. 'For (as Tacitus saith of Claudius) there is no safety with that prince, into whose mind all things are conveyed, as it were by infusion and direction from others.' And Comines saith very well, 'It is better to be servant to a prince whose suspicions have no end, than to one whose credulity hath no measure.'"

After this there follows, in the next verse but one, another admonition to princes: (ver. 14.) and then a double admonition to private parents, to take care of the good education of their children; as the best way to make a kingdom happy, and to prevent the increase of wickedness. About which he interposes an observation between these two: in the explanation of all which verses, I have had some respect to the LXX. without any injury to our translation.

[*k*] And so I have done in the next, (ver. 18.) where by *vision*, or rather *prophecy*, they understood ἐξηγητὴς, an expounder of the laws of God to the people; which was the office of the prophets: who had a great stroke also in the government (as Melancthon observes), and by their counsels, when they were followed, made the kingdom flourishing. As Elisha for about seventy years governed the counsels of their kings in the greatest calamities; particularly in the siege of Samaria: after whose death the kingdom endured not much above a hundred years, agitated by perpetual seditions. Thus Esaiah, by his counsels to Hezekiah a good part of the people were saved. From such examples, saith he, we may gather that when *prophecy* ceased, the people were scattered (so he translates the word *para*); because for want of wholesome counsellors there follow, in empires, strifes of ambition, and seditions, which all tend to utter ruin: yet the second part of this sentence, saith he, admonishes us, that a remnant should be safe in their dispersions; *viz.* such as kept the Divine doctrine. For want of which God takes away men's instructors, when they are not obedient to wholesome precepts. So the LXX. translate this verse (minding the sense rather than the words), *there is no expounder of the law to a wicked lawless nation*, &c. God *strips* them even of their teachers; as some translate the word *para, perish:* which hath various significations, most of which I have expressed in the Paraphrase; because they all agree well enough to this place.

[*l*] There is an exposition of the next words, (ver. 19.) which would be very natural, if the wise man spake only of the commands of ministers to their servants; which they pretend sometime not to hear, that they may not do as they are bidden. But he speaks of their not amending the faults, of which they have been already told: which is not the quality of all *servants;* and therefore I have said a *slave*. Or else we must interpret it, as the LXX. do of οἰκέτης σκληρός, *a stubborn, obstinate servant;* whose heart is hardened against all words that can be spoken to him, good or bad.

[*m*] But I must make no more glosses, for fear of prolong-

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ing this preface too much beyond its just bounds. And therefore I shall conclude it with the Lord Bacon's observation upon ver. 21. (where the LXX. have expressed but a little part of the sense) "that both *princes* and private *masters* should keep a *mean* in the dispensation of their grace and favour towards *servants:* which *mean* is threefold. First, that servants *be promoted by steps* (or degrees), *not by leaps.* Secondly, that *they be now and then accustomed to repulses.* Thirdly (which Machiavel well advises), that they *have ever in their sight before them something whereunto they may farther aspire.* For unless these courses be taken, in raising of servants, princes shall, instead of thankful acknowledgments and dutiful observance, be repaid with nothing but disdain and contumacy. For from sudden promotion arises *insolence;* from constant attainment of their desire proceeds *impatience of being denied;* and there being nothing remaining that they can farther wish, *alacrity* and *industry* will cease."

Ver. 1. *He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*] He that having received frequent reproofs from good men, and perhaps corrections from God, will not yield in the least, but absolutely refuse to be guided by them, and submit unto them, is in danger to fall, and that on a sudden, into utter and irreparable ruin. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.*] When just and merciful governors make virtuous men grow numerous, (xxviii. 28.) a kingdom is happy: but when an unjust man rules, the wicked get into places of trust; and make the people miserably groan under their oppressions. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.*] A young man whose love of wisdom and virtue preserves his body as pure as his mind, and his estate as entire as both, gives the greatest joy to his father: as, on the contrary, nothing can be a greater grief to him, than to see his son so sottish, as to maintain a company of harlots; whose covetousness being as insatiable as their lust, devoureth all that he hath. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.*] A king that administers justice exactly to all his subjects, restores his kingdom to a good estate, though it had been before in great disorder: but he who, having no respect to equity and right, takes the most illegal courses to enrich himself, subverts it utterly; though it be never so well settled. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.*] He that soothes up his neighbour, by commending all that he doth, though never so directly against his interest, is so far from being his friend, as he imagines, that he is a traitor to him; and leads him, unawares, into such dangers, that when he finds himself perplexed in them, he will treat that flatterer as his greatest enemy. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 6. *In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.*] A naughty man hath a heavy heart at last, when he finds himself undone by those very arts, whereby he thought to have ruined others: but pious men are always cheerful, nay, full of joy; both to think that they are in safe and secure ways, and to see the evil-doer caught in his own wickedness.

Ver. 7. *The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.*] A righteous man, when he is in authority, not only readily receives, and patiently weighs, the complaints of the poorest person; but is at the pains to study his cause, that he may fully understand it, and do him right, though he thereby incur hatred to himself from the adverse party: but a wicked man will not attend unto it, or not use due care to be well instructed in it. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 8. *Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.*] There are no greater fools than scorners, who, by laughing at all things serious, whether sacred or civil, put a kingdom into a combustion, when it is disposed to be quiet; nay, turn things topsy-turvy, and endanger its utter ruin, unless good and cautious men prevent it; who, by their piety, turn away the Divine vengeance; and by their prudence, and other virtues, divert the fury of men, which these scorners have raised. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 9. *If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.*] Let a man be never so wise, it is to no purpose for him to dispute or to enter into any contest with an obstinate fool: for which way soever he deal with him, whether angrily or pleasantly, there will be no end of the controversy; but the fool will still have the last word; nay, it is well if he do not either restlessly rage, or laugh one to scorn. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 10. *The blood-thirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.*] Men enormously wicked, who stick not to kill those that oppose their desires, above all others hate and would destroy an upright magistrate; whose integrity makes him courageously endeavour to bring them to condign punishment; but such a person all virtuous men love the more heartily, and labour to defend and preserve from their violence; or to revenge his death, if he should perish by them. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 11. *A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterward.*] A fool is so inconsiderately transported by his passion, or conceit of himself, that when he comes to treat of any business, he can put no stop to his discourse, but runs on till he hath poured out all that he thinks upon that subject; but a wise man represses the heat and forwardness of his spirit, that he may pause and take time to declare his mind, not altogether, but by parcels. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 12. *If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.*] A prince who hearkens to the false suggestions of those that tell him he may do what he pleases; or who easily believes, without any examination, all the stories and accusations that are brought him against others, fills his whole court with so many wicked men, that it is hard to find an honest minister or officer among them. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 13. *The poor and the deceitful man meet together; the Lord lighteneth both their eyes.*] The world is made up of several sorts of men: of poor, for instance, who are fain to borrow, and of rich, who lend them money, and perhaps oppress them: but these would all agree well enough, when they meet together, if they would but con-

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sider, that there is one Lord who makes the sun to shine equally on all; and who intends all should live happily, though in an unequal condition. (See xxii. 2.)

Ver. 14. *The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.*] A king that administers justice equally to all his subjects, and cannot be moved by the power or interest of the greatest persons to deny it to the meanest; but faithfully and sincerely sets himself to help the poor to their right, or to defend them from violence and wrong; takes the surest course to settle himself in the affections of his people, and continue his kingdom for many generations.

Ver. 15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*] The way to make a child wise and virtuous, is not only to instruct him in his duty, but to check him when he is in fault; and that not merely by reproof, but by the sharp discipline of the rod, when the other will do no good; for if he be left to his own will, or rather to wander after his own inclinations without such restraints, he will prove, in all likelihood, a disgrace to his mother, by whose indulgence he was spoiled; nay, fly, perhaps, in her face, and openly reproach her, (x. 1.)

Ver. 16. *When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.*] When the wicked grow numerous, by growing great, (ver. 2.) men take the greater licence to transgress; and wickedness increases by having authority on its side: but let not the righteous hereby be discouraged; for the wickeder men are, the shorter is their reign: and they that preserve their virtue shall have the pleasure to behold their downfall.

Ver. 17. *Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.*] It may seem most for thy ease to let thy child alone, without giving him correction or reproof; but let me advise thee to put thyself to this trouble, to save thyself a greater (*viz.* many anxious and restless thoughts, which his ill doing will raise in thee), or rather to give thyself the highest delight, when, by thy care of his education, he proves a great ornament unto thee.

Ver. 18. *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*] Where there are none to instruct the people, and expound the will of God unto them, they first grow idle and careless, and run into all licentiousness; till, growing refractory and ungovernable, they be abandoned by God to destruction; but when they are not only well taught, but also strictly observe the laws of God, they remain in a prosperous, happy condition. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 19. *A servant will not be corrected by words; for though he understand he will not answer.*] A slave, and he that is of a servile nature, is not to be amended by reason and persuasions; no, nor by reproofs, or threats: for, though he hears, and understands too, what you say, yet he will not obey, till he be forced unto it by blows. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 20. *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*] Observe it when you will, you shall commonly find that he who is forward to speak to a business, before his betters, or before he understands it, or hath considered it, is so conceited of himself, that a man wholly ignorant may sooner be rightly informed, than he who is so well persuaded of his own sufficiency.

Ver. 21. *He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length.*] It is so hard for a man of base condition to bear a sudden preferment handsomely, that it is dangerous to express too much kindness to a servant at the very first; by feeding him delicately, clothing him finely, or indulging him too much ease, liberty, and familiarity: for this is the way to make him saucy, if not contumacious; nay, to domineer and take upon him, as if he were a son, and, perhaps, endeavour to disinherit the heir of the family. See Arg. [*m*]

Ver. 22. *An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*] A man prone to anger is very troublesome and unpeaceable, being apt to quarrel about trifles: and, as he offends very often, so, if he let it proceed to rage and fury, he falls into abundance of sins; both in word and deed, against God, and against his neighbour.

Ver. 23. *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*] Proud and contumelious behaviour, instead of procuring men respect, throws them into the contempt and hatred of all; and, at last, into destruction; but he whose meek and lowly mind makes him kind and obliging, shall be highly esteemed; and the esteem he hath shall be his support, when others fall to ruin.

Ver. 24. *Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.*] He that partakes with a thief, by harbouring him, when he is pursued, or by receiving stolen goods, &c. hath the same guilt upon him with the thief himself; and, as he hath put his own life in danger to save the thief's, so this will engage him to run his soul into greater danger, to save his life: for being adjured to discover what he knows, he will go near to forswear himself, for fear of being hanged.

Ver. 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.*] As all inordinate fear bereaves a man of counsel and power to help himself; so he that stands in too great fear of what men can do unto him, will be ensnared in many sins, and perils also, to avoid their displeasure: but he that confides in the Lord hath his wits always about him, and, being raised above such low considerations, preserves his integrity; and that, by God's good providence over him, will preserve him in safety.

Ver. 26. *Many seek the ruler's favour: but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord.*] There are multitudes of men who are ambitious to be known to their prince, and obtain his favour for honour and preferment; but few remember that there is a greater Lord than he, the sovereign of all the world, whose grace and favour should be principally sought: for he determines and orders what every man's portion shall be; and will both judge of men's deserts better than any earthly king can do, and deal with them according as they behave themselves, in that condition wherein they are.

Ver. 27. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.*] There is such a perfect antipathy between virtue and vice, that all truly good men extremely abominate him that doth mischief in the world, though he be never so great and powerful; as, on the contrary, the evil-doer hath every man that behaves himself uprightly, though never so useful, in utter abhorrence and detestation.

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PART IV.

CHAP. XXX.

ARGUMENT.

[a] This chapter contains a new collection of pithy sayings, which some fancy to be Solomon's; and therefore translate the two first words thus: *the words of the collector*, or *gatherer*. But why Solomon should call himself by this name, and also, instead of the son of David, style himself the *son of Jakeh*, seems to me unaccountable. And therefore it is most reasonable to follow our translation (unto which the wisest of those that adhere to the Vulgar are forced to consent, as most literal), and to look upon this chapter as a fragment of some wise sentences, delivered by one whose name was Agur, and his father's name Jakeh: unless we will conceive that this son of Jakeh (whosoever he was) had gotten the name of *collector*, because, though he was a very wise man, yet he composed nothing himself; but only *gathered* out of other wise men's works such instructions as he thought most profitable, and comprised, in a few words, a great deal of sense.

[b] Which conjecture, if it be admitted, nothing can better explain his disclaiming the title of a *wise man*, (ver. 2.) which he would not assume to himself, because he was only a *collector* from other authors, and did not pretend to have discovered or invented any thing himself.

But take it how we will, some of his observations are here annexed to the Proverbs of Solomon, after the manner of other writings of this nature. In which (as Melancthon notes) the greater part of a book belonging to one author, some notable speeches of others have been inserted: as some of the Sibylline verses, they say, were into the poem of Phocilides.

[c] And these words of Agur are called *massa*, which we translate *prophecy*, either to denote the weightiness of the sentences, or that they were culled and selected out of some work of his, then remaining in their records, as fit (in the judgment of the *men of Hezekiah*, who perhaps extracted them) to accompany the Proverbs of Solomon. And they seem to me to be answers to several questions propounded to him by his scholars, Ithiel (who was the principal) and Ucal: who came to him, as if he had been an oracle, to be resolved in some hard doubts; asking him in the first place, just as they did Apollo of old (as Aben Ezra conjectures), *Who was the wisest man?* To which he replies, (ver. 2.) *He that is sensible of his own ignorance.* Much like the saying of Socrates, *This only I know, that I know nothing:* and of Pythagoras, who also refused the name of *wise;* which made much for the reputation of his wisdom.

[d] Upon this subject Agur enlarges, ver. 3, 4. wishing his scholars, especially Ithiel (who, I suppose, asked the question in the name of the rest), to be sensible how imperfect all human knowledge is; by considering how little or nothing we know of the works of God, which none can understand (though they be perpetually before our eyes) but he alone that made them. And therefore advises him to make it his principal study to understand what belonged to his own duty (which is the best part of knowledge), ver. 5. and herein also to be content with what God hath revealed, and not pretend to be wiser than he hath made us, (ver. 6.)

[e] After which, he gives answers, as I take it, unto other questions, which Ithiel propounded to him. And, first, about *prayer*. For Agur, having repressed their busy humour of inquiry into all manner of things, had raised, we may suppose, some devotion in his scholars' hearts, which made them desire to be directed in it. And he gives them most wise advice, ver. 7, 8. to be very cautious what they prayed for; just as in Plato (Alcibiad. 2.) we find Socrates giving Alcibiades instructions about this, as a principal part of virtue; in the practice of which, he tells him, there had need to be the greatest care, lest we imprudently ask those things that are not good for us. But he could not give Alcibiades such directions about this matter, as Agur here gives Ithiel and the rest of his scholars, whom he informs, that the true knowledge of God is the chiefest good, and therefore to be desired in the first place, above all other goods: and then (according to our Saviour's rule, in aftertimes), having first sought the things that belong to religion, he directs them to beg of God moderate desires of all earthly things; believing that we are safer in a mediocrity, or middle estate, than either in fulness or in want. To which purpose Melancthon and others have gathered together many sayings out of other writers. But none have given such reasons for this choice of a middle state as this wise man, (ver. 9.)

[f] After which, he seems to answer a question, which Ithiel propounded, about *moral virtue:* which having been largely treated of by Solomon, he only gives him one caution against hard-heartedness to slaves and servants, (ver. 10.) of which the Hebrew nation were generally very guilty, and thereby unmeet for that favour which they begged of God in their prayers, which ought to have disposed them to be favourable unto others.

[g] And then he gives the character of four sorts of men who are execrable unto God, and therefore ought to be avoided by all those that would be good, (ver. 11—14.) which I must pass by without any farther account of them but what I have given in the Paraphrase: because the fifteenth verse hath much difficulty in it, and therefore requires some time to be spent in opening it. Bochartus thinks to solve some of the difficulty by giving a new signification of the word *aluka*. But all interpreters, in a manner, taking it for that thick worm in waterish places, which we call a *horse-leech*, I do not think fit to forsake our translation: nor to refer the beginning of the verse to that immediately foregoing, (as some do in this manner: *Detractors can no more leave off evil-speaking, than the horse-leech leave off sucking*, &c.) but rather to those words immediately following in this same verse, which, notwithstanding, I take to have some connexion with all the four foregoing, as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase. For it seems to me to be an answer to some such question as this which the disciples had propounded to their master Agur, (after the manner of enigmatical discourses or riddles), *What is most insatiable?* which he chooses to give an account of in this place, the better to represent the nature of those wicked men he had spoken

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of before: especially of the two last; the *proud*, and the *tyrannical* or *extortioner*, whose desires are a gulf that can never be filled.

And at the first he seems to have thought but of two things, *viz.* the *grave* and the *barren womb*; which might be called the *daughters of the horse-leech*, because they are so perfectly of the like nature, in regard of their insatiableness. But he presently adds another; nay, a fourth came into his mind as no less greedy: *viz.* the *thirsty earth* (which in those hot countries sucks up all the rain as fast as it falls, though never so much), and the *fire*, which devours all the fuel that is laid upon it. And this he expresses after the manner of the Hebrews; who, intending to mention four things or more, separate them at first, and begin with a lesser number, and proceed then to all that they designed. There are many examples of it in Amos i. 3. 5. 9, &c. and here in this book of Proverbs, vi. 16. and below in this chapter, ver. 18. 21, &c. Indeed there is no example like this, where the sentence begins with two, and then says three, and then four: but that might be usual, of which we have no exact example; and therefore I do not look upon this as a sufficient objection against this way of explaining this verse. Which the LXX. have taken in the Roman edition, which runs thus: *The horse-leech hath three beloved daughters, and these three are never satisfied: and there is a fourth that saith not, It sufficeth.*

There are those who compare certain vices with these four insatiable things, and not inaptly: *the desire of revenge*, to the grave; *libidinous desires*, to the barren womb; *covetousness* (or rather *drunkenness*), to the thirsty earth; and *ambition*, to the devouring fire. And it is easy to shew, how fitly all these are resembled to the *horse-leech:* it being the vulgar saying, That *harlots* (for instance) *are the horse-leeches of young men*, sucking all their money from them, and exhausting their bodies too. And the servant in Plautus, when he was about to rob the chests of the two old men, says, "Jam ego me vertam in hirudinem," &c. *now I will turn myself into a horse-leech, and suck out their very blood.*

But I forbear such things, because there are others more necessary to be added for the understanding the rest of the chapter.

[*h*] And that which next follows, ver. 17. is a reflection upon the first generation of wicked men, (mentioned ver. 11.) who sinned against the first commandment of the second table (as we speak), and for their rebellion against their parents were adjudged to death by the law of Moses, (Exod. xxi. 15. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Deut. xxi. 18.) And to make them more detestable, their carcasses, perhaps, were thrown into some loathsome place, called *the valley of carcasses*, or *dead bodies*, (Jer. xxxi. 40.) and *the valley of crows* (as Bochartus conjectures), or *ravens:* whom the wise man here speaks of. And besides this, they who abuse their parents, being of a villanous nature, were likely to turn rogues, and to commit robberies, murders, treasons, or such-like horrid crimes: which would bring them to the gallows (as we speak), or some such infamous death. The Jews, indeed, might not suffer the body of one that was hanged, after he had been put to death, to remain upon the gibbet, beyond the evening of that day wherein he was executed. But they were not forbidden to let him lie unburied, in some polluted place, when he was taken down: and in some cases, we find, they did let dead bodies hang a long time, as we read 2 Sam. xxi. And therefore Paulus Fagius (upon Exod. xx. 12.) expounds these words of Agur after this manner: "Disobedient children shall come to an ignominious death, and end their days by a halter, or other punishment; and so become crows' meat." But there is no necessity of this explication. For we may conceive such a wicked person to be *drowned* by the just judgment of God upon him; and his body to lie floating on the water; or to be cast on shore, where the *ravens* (who frequent the waters) come and pick out his eyes, at which they are observed to fly, sooner than any other part. He might *perish also in other countries*, where the infamous punishment of the gibbet was in use; or be *slain in battle;* and left there to be a prey to beasts and birds. Among which the *raven* is the rather mentioned, some think, because the young ones are so impious (as Vossius speaks, lib. iii. de Idol. cap. 85.) as to fall upon the old ones and kill them, when they are hungry (which is affirmed by Ælian and others), and therefore more fitly employed to pick out the eyes of undutiful children. But I look upon this as having more of fancy than solidity in it: for others, for the quite contrary reason, make the *eagles* here named, because they are a bird full of piety; as hath been observed out of Aben Ezra, by our learned Dr. Castell, whose discourse in his speech (in Schol. Theol. p. 31.) I shall here set down for the explication of one word in this verse; wherein he differs from all others: which is יקהת. This word the Hebrews interpret *doctrina*, and understand the verse thus: *The eye that despiseth the doctrine or the lesson of his mother*, &c. But there is no known root in their language from whence to derive this signification of it: and therefore that doctor, out of the neighbouring languages, translates it rather *senium, old age:* which is most agreeable to the sense of the place. For that which is despised by the *eye* is some corporal defect (as *crookedness, wrinkles, shaking of the head*, &c. and such-like things which attend old age), not any thing belonging to the mind. And besides (saith he) it better agrees with what follows of the *eagle's young ones* picking out such an eye: for they are observed to bear a regard to their ancients, and to have a kind of piety in them.

[*i*] In the next words, (ver. 18—20.) he resolves another riddle they put to him, which was this: *What things are most obscure and unaccountable, though ordinary and common?* of which I have given the best explication I could in the Paraphrase; but cannot farther explain here, without making this preface (which must necessarily be longer than ordinary, unless I should give no account of several things in the following verses which require explication) a great deal too much exceed the proportion which belongs to it.

[*k*] Next to these four *inscrutable* things, he subjoins four more, which are *very grievous*, or rather *intolerable*, because of their great indignity: (ver. 21—23.) the two first belong to men, and the disturbance of the commonwealth; the two last to women, and the disturbance of private families. And there are reasons peculiar to each: *ex. gr.* a slave is intolerable when he gets the

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sceptre into his hand (as they have done sometimes), partly because such persons, being ill-bred, generally have base principles, and are accustomed to vile things; and grow insolent by their good fortune: partly because they are full of fears and suspicions, especially that they are despised and contemned; and, therefore, believing they are not loved, they will be feared, and care not what cruelties they exercise to keep men under. Part of which the Jews object to themselves in Schebet Judah; where they bring in a philosopher laying this to their charge, That they affecting dominion in the city of Toledo, proceeded to such boldness and sauciness, that they would openly strike Christians: which fulfilled, saith he, that of Solomon, xxx. 22.

[*l*] The like might be said of the other three; but I shall only observe concerning the last, that there being another way of explaining it, besides that which is most obvious, I have not omitted it: because the LXX. go that way, who thus render it, *When a servant-maid casts her mistress out of doors.* And there is a third way, which I have not mentioned, because it is not so agreeable to the words; when the mistress is not expelled, but the *maid also is taken to wife and preferred in the husband's love:* as N. de Lyra takes it: examples of which we have in history, that have proved very fatal to families. But this preface, as I said, would be too long if I should name them; therefore I pass to the next.

[*m*] Which seems to be an answer to this question, "Quid est magnum in minimo?" *What is great in little?* or rather in *the least?* ver. 24, &c. where he teaches us several things: first, not to admire merely bodily bulk, strength, or beauty; but rather wisdom, diligence, and sagacity, to understand and pursue our own interest: secondly, to admire the wisdom and power of God in the smallest things: and, thirdly (as Melancthon adds), to reflect upon our own degenerate state, who neglect our own greatest good; nay, mind not self-preservation, but rather destroy ourselves by vice and wickedness: and, lastly, not to refuse admonition from the brutes. Among which, saith he, the *ants* teach us industry and forecast; the *rabbits* not to attempt any thing above our strength; the *locusts*, to preserve society by industry, and not to break it by sedition and disturbance of the public order; and the *spider*, to endeavour to excel in some art or other. All of them teach us not to rely merely on strength, but to use counsel and prudence.

The first and second of which reflections I find in St. Chrysostom, who discourses admirably (Hom. xii. ad pop. Antioch. p. 139.) of the wonderfulness of the Divine artifice, which in so small a body as that of the *ant* hath contrived such a perpetual desire of labour. To which, if we attend, we cannot but receive this instruction, μὴ καταμαλακίζεσθαι, μηδὲ φεύγειν ἱδρῶτα καὶ πόνους· *not to affect softness and delicacy, nor fly from sweat and labours.* And when the wise man sends us, saith he, to learn of these little creatures, he does just as we are wont to do in families; when the greater and the better sort have offended in any thing, we endeavour to shame them, by pointing to the little children, saying, Βλέπε τὸν μικρότερον σου, πῶς ἐστι σπουδαῖος καὶ διεγηγερμένος. *Behold, one that is a great deal less than thou, how towardly, how attentive and ready he is to do as he is bidden.*

[*n*] But that word which we translate *conies*, ver. 26. (which are not so small a creature as Solomon here speaks of, nor make their holes in rocks) Bochartus hath evidently proved signifies a *mouse* in those countries (whose hinder legs are longer than their fore legs), called by the Arabians in their language *aljarbuo;* whose craft I have briefly expressed in the Paraphrase.

[*o*] In what is said of the *locusts* also, ver. 27. I have followed him: who observes, that to *go forth*, is a Scripture phrase for *making war*. In which the general was wont to divide the prey among the soldiers, after a victory: but the *locusts*, having no settled constant commander, divide among themselves. Yet I have not neglected our translation.

[*p*] Which in the twenty-eighth verse hath forsaken the ancient interpreters, who take *semamith* not for a *spider*, but for a small sort of *lizard;* from its spots called *stellio;* which is accounted by all authors a very crafty creature: and to which the characters here given by Solomon do most properly belong. As the same Bochartus hath shewn at large, lib. iv. cap. 7. de Sacr. Animal. par. i. But if any have a list to understand hereby some sort of *spider*, they may read Cœlius Secundus's little book called Araneus: in which he represents the wonderful wisdom of God, in the structure of this small creature; together with its admirable agility, and cunning; both in *weaving* its *webs* and *nets;* and in *hunting* for its prey (particularly for young *lizards*), and in *preserving* itself; and its foresense of dangers, and of opportunities to catch its prey: for instance, against rainy weather; when other little creatures grow dull in their motion and in their sight. In short, he observes, that as there is nothing in appearance so mean, so abject, so small, in which the Creator of all is not to be adored, and whose usefulness is not very great; so there are five things which are admirable in that sort of *spider*, which he describes: the exhausted matter which it spins out of so small a body; the wisdom of its contrivances; strength in fighting; knowledge of the future; and usefulness for medicine.

[*pp*] And from all these four, some have noted, that an abridgment may be made of all that is necessary for the conversation of a kingdom in good estate: where, first, care must be taken for provision of food, which we learn from the *pismire;* then for secure and commodious dwelling, which we learn from the second sort of creature; and then that there be concord and agreement among domestics and citizens, which we learn from the third; and lastly, that labour, industry, and ingenious arts be encouraged and advanced, which we learn from the fourth.

[*q*] After the consideration of these four little creatures, of small strength and contemptible aspect, he places four other which are great, stately, and undaunted, (ver. 29, &c.) In which there are two considerable difficulties; one about that word in ver. 31. which we translate a *greyhound* (the Vulgar a *cock;* though Maldonate ingeniously conjectures the true reading in St. Jerome was *gallicus canis*, which afterward came to be corrupted into *gallus*), but I take rather for a *horse* (as our margin hath it), being a far braver and more stately creature than either of those; especially when he prances, and is managed by a rider.

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The other is about the last words of the same verse: which are the character he gives of *a king*, (who perhaps is immediately placed after the *he-goat*, because that creature in Scripture is an emblem of majesty, Dan. viii. 5. 21. Isa. xiv. 9. Jer. l. 8, &c.) *alkûm immò*, which Bochartus translates, *against whom none of his subjects ought to rise*. For though many do, yet it is so contrary to their duty, and so dangerous, that he therefore calls him *Alkum, against whom none arises*. So Pallas was called by the Phœnicians, *Ela Alkuma*, the goddess against whom none made *insurrection*. And the city in Bœotia that was sacred to her (she being reputed to be born there) was called Alalcomenas: for though it was small and built in a plain, yet it always remained untouched and inviolated, because, out of reverence to the goddess, πάντες ἀπείχοντο πάσης βίας (as Strabo speaks), *all men abstained from all force and violence to it*. Thus he discourses in his Epist. quæ Resp. ad tres Quest. p. 43. And I find he had said it before in his Phaleg. second part, lib. i. cap. 16. where he translates *melec Alcum, rex invictus, an invincible king*.

But there is another conjecture of a very learned man of our own, Mr. Pocock, (Not. ad Greg. Abulfarai. p. 203.) which is so pat, that I could not omit it in my Paraphrase. For, according to the Arabic use of the word *alkum* (out of which language both rabbins and Christians take the liberty to expound the Hebrew words of the Bible, when they are singular), the sense is still more pregnant, and sounds thus: *A king with whom his people is*, or *whom his people follow*. For as, when there is such a happy agreement between king and people, there is nothing more comely; so then he appears with the greatest and most awful majesty, and strikes terror into all his enemies.

[*r*] The two last verses, if we take them severed from the foregoing, are an advice how to be happy: which the whole chapter shews in effect is, to endeavour to be innocent. But because no man can be so wise as never to do a foolish thing; he seems, in conclusion, to tell what is next to that, *viz.* when we have miscarried any way, not to justify it; but to appease those whom we have offended, by silence: taking shame to ourselves, and not defending what we have done amiss, much less making complaints of others, &c. For (as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase, ver. last) by insisting upon our innocence, or charging others, or exaggerating faults, very great mischiefs may ensue.

But these two verses may be connected with that which precedes (though I have not been bold to do it, because interpreters go the other way); and ver. 32. may be an advice to *subjects* if they have offended their prince any way, and been so foolish as to oppose him, not to persist in their error; much less to defend it, and clamour upon the government, &c. but sit down in silence, bewailing the guilt, and imploring a pardon. And then ver. 33. may be looked upon as advice to *princes*, not to oppress their subjects; and thereby provoke them to rebel against them.

The Vulgar Latin seems to refer both to *princes:* for thus runs the sense of ver. 32. according to that translation (which I cannot indeed reconcile well with the Hebrew), *It sometimes happens, that he who is advanced on high* (to a throne suppose) *appears to be a fool: who if he had understood* (*viz.* his danger, or his folly, or what had been best for him) *would have put his hand upon his mouth:* that is, never have desired that dignity which, perhaps, he earnestly sought. And, though I know not how to justify this translation, it agrees well with what follows, which may well be applied unto *princes*, that *it is great folly to strain things too far*. Either the *laws*, which if extended to the utmost rigour will, by such hard construction, become the bane of human society; or their *taxes* and exactions beyond what the people can bear. For by squeezing them too much, most dangerous seditions and rebellions have happened under excellent princes.

And thus Melancthon understands the beginning of this verse, (ver. 33.) that empires and governments ought to be moderate; according to two excellent sayings of Plato and Solon; which he alleges: and then concludes that *anger* also ought to be repressed (according to the admonition in the last words), lest public discords arise which draw after them vast ruins: and ofttimes arise from light causes; which ought to have been mollified and cured by some moderation, and not exasperated into a flame.

Ver. 1. *THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.*] Here now follow some memorable sayings of Agur, who was the son of Jakeh; out of whose works these weighty sentences were collected, which he uttered like a prophetical teacher to Ithiel, one of his most eminent scholars, and to Ucal, another of them, but especially to the former. See Arg. [*a*] [*c*]

Ver. 2. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.*] Who admiring his wisdom, and desiring to be resolved in many difficulties, Agur modestly and humbly said, Do not call me wise: for I am so far from that acuteness which is natural to him who excels in wisdom, that I am stupid, in comparison with such a person; nay, I cannot arrogate to myself the understanding of a common man. See Arg. [*b*] [*c*]

Ver. 3. *I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.*] And as for improvements, which are made by the help of knowing persons, I have not had the advantages of many other men: for I was never brought up in the schools of the prophets, where I might have learned some wisdom, much less have I received the knowledge of such sacred mysteries as thou inquirest after; the most I can pretend unto is, only to know what belongs to a pious life. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?*] But had I a greater reach, or been better bred, it would have been impossible for me to give an account of the works of God; much less of God himself. For where is he among all the wise men that ever went up into heaven, and came down again to tell us the order and motion of the stars; and all the rest that is done there? Nay, who is it, that can so much as give us the least account of the wind, but God alone? who hath it perfectly in his

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power to make it cease and blow again as he pleaseth. And to come lower yet, who but he hath tied up the waves of the sea, that they should not exceed their bounds? Or, who hath fixed the earth (on which thou dwellest, and therefore art better acquainted withal) within such limits, as it never breaks? By what name is he called that can explain these things? or, if thou knowest, tell me the name of his son, or of his family; that, if he be dead, we may inquire of them.

Ver. 5. *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*] The most that any man can do for thy satisfaction, is this; to send thee to the book of God, and bid thee be content with what he hath there revealed of himself, and of his will; which in every part of it is so sincere, and free from all mixture of deceit, that thou mayest safely rely upon it; and take his word, that he will protect and defend all those who, in obedience to his commands, trust him for what he hath promised.

Ver. 6. *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*] Let this suffice thee; and do not pretend to greater acquaintance with his will, than really thou hast; by adding any thing of thy own to God's word, and vouching it for his; which may bring thee into great danger of the severest punishments from him; for being guilty of the worst of forgeries, in counterfeiting Divine inspiration.

Ver. 7. *Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die.*] And in answer to the question about prayer, *(what things thou shouldest ask of God?)* I have not much to say neither; for I would not have thee multiply words, but say, as I am wont to do: I humbly beg only two things of thee, O God; which I most earnestly beseech thee, I may not want, as long as I stay in this world.

Ver. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.*] The first is for my mind; that I may be perfectly secured from being deceived myself by false opinions, especially concerning thee and religion; and from being any ways guilty of deceiving other men: and then, for the supply of my bodily necessities, I desire thou wouldest neither give me scarcity nor superfluity; but, if I may choose, a middle between both: making me such a competent allowance as may be sufficient to maintain me decently, in that state and condition of life wherein thou hast placed me. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 9. *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*] For I am sensible how great danger there is, either in having abundance of wealth, which may tempt me to be so profane and irreligious, as not only to forget the Donor of all good things, but atheistically to contemn thy worship and service; nay, insolently to profess, that I know no such thing as the Lord, nor have any thing to do with him: or in a beggarly condition, which may press me, first to be injurious unto others for my own relief; and then to run into the fearful crime of perjury, to purge myself from the charge of theft, (Exod. xxii. 8. 11.)

Ver. 10. *Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.*] As for rules of behaviour towards others, they are generally well known; and therefore I only admonish thee to avoid one thing (to which our nation is too prone); that is, not to abuse any poor slave, whose condition is wretched enough; and therefore, for instance, rather excuse than aggravate his fault to his master, who perhaps is too rigorous: and be sure never to load him with unjust accusations, lest, being wronged by thee, and not knowing how to right himself, he appeal to the Lord, and pray him to punish thee; and thou, being found guilty, feel the heavy effects of his vengeance. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 11. *There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.*] And now, to answer your inquiry, *What company you should keep?* there are four sorts of men, I would have you set a mark upon, and cautiously shun. First, they that are foully ungrateful to them from whom they have received many benefits: for such a sort of men there is, who have no sense of obligations, no, not to their parents, to whom they have the greatest; but rail upon their father, nay, wish him dead; and cannot speak a good word of their mother.

Ver. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*] Next to these are a sort of hypocrites; who have a great opinion of their own purity, and would be thought by others very virtuous: but hide the greatest filthiness, both in their minds and lives (which either they do not see, or will not take care to purge away), under this outward garb of holiness.

Ver. 13. *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.*] There is a third sort, whose pride and arrogance is so lofty, that it appears in their very countenance; and makes them superciliously overlook all other men, as if they were not worthy of the least respect from them.

Ver. 14. *There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.*] But the fourth and last sort is most mischievous, whose ravenous cruelty hath no example; unless you conceive a lion or wolf, that hath teeth, both small and great, as sharp as swords or knives, coming with open mouth to devour every creature that is weaker than themselves: such is the savage oppression of tyrants, extortioners, calumniators, &c. who have no mercy upon the poor and needy; but make their condition (which moves compassion in other men) so insufferable, that they are weary of living any longer in the world.

Ver. 15. *The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough.*] And here I will satisfy one of your other questions, *What creature is most insatiable?* I answer, the *horse-leech;* which sucks the blood of other creatures till it bursts: as those wicked men do the livelihood of the poor, till they ruin themselves. And in this perpetual craving more and more, without any end, there are two things so like the horse-leech, that they may be called her daughters: nay, there are three that are never satisfied; or rather four, whose desires cannot be filled. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 16. *The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.*] They are these: *death,* or the *grave;* which having consumed so many past generations, will as greedily swallow up and consume all that are yet to come: the *barren womb;* which is wont to be desirous of children beyond measure: the *earth,* which drinks up all the rain

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that falls upon it, and still thirsts for more: and the *fire*, which devours all the fuel that is thrown into it, and never ceases to burn, as long as there is any thing to feed it.

Ver. 17. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*] I will not end this, till I have pronounced the doom of the first sort of wicked men, now mentioned, (ver. 11.) who are so ungrateful to their parents, as not only to disobey their commands, but to scorn, nay, and deride their persons; and mock at the infirmities of their old age: whose villanies shall bring them to an infamous end, and expose their dead bodies for a prey to the ravens (which frequent the brooks that run in the valleys) and to the young eagles; who shall pick out those eyes, in which their scorn and derision of their parents were wont to appear. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 18. *There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four, which I know not.*] To your next question, my answer is, that there are three things, whose motions are beyond my reach: nay a fourth, which is the most unaccountable of all the rest. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 19. *The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid.*] First, the wonderful swiftness of an eagle's flight into the air, quite out of our sight: (xxiii. 5.) secondly, the manner of a serpent's speedy creeping, without any feet, to the top of a slippery rock: thirdly, the way that a ship makes in the sea, though it seems sometime to sink to the bottom of the water, and to mount up into the air: but above all, the slipperiness of youth, (which is more inconstant than the air, &c.) and especially the impatience and restless tossing of a young man's mind, his cunning and sleights when he goes a wooing; and the wonderful arts he hath to slide into the heart of a maid, and win her love.

Ver. 20. *Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.*] And yet the subtilty of an adulterous woman is equal to this; both in crafty contrivances of secret ways to enjoy her filthy pleasures, and in casting a mist before her husband's eyes to conceal them, when she is in danger to be discovered. For having defiled his bed, she not only looks modestly and demurely, but professes the greatest innocency; and behaves herself as if she were the honestest woman, and the kindest wife too, in the world; like one that having eaten some forbidden meat, wipes her mouth, and says, she has not so much as tasted it; but abhors to let it come within her lips.

Ver. 21. *For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear.*] And to satisfy your other question, *What things are most intolerable?* my answer is, that three things make such a disturbance, that men groan under the load of them: nay, there are four, which are an insupportable grievance unto those that are oppressed by them. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 22. *For a servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat.*] First, the insolent cruelty of a vile slave, when he is advanced to a throne: secondly, the petulant rudeness of a fortunate fool; especially when he grows debauched, and is in one of his drunken fits:

Ver. 23. *For an odious woman when she is married, and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress.*] And, thirdly, a woman, whose moroseness, pride, and passion, and such-like ill qualities, make her hated by every body, when she gets a husband: and, lastly, a poor maid-servant, when she is puffed up by an estate, left her by her mistress; or, which is worse, that having supplanted her mistress, and thrust her, first out of her husband's affections, and then out of doors, succeeds in her place, and becomes his wife. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 24. *There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise.*] To these four *intolerable* things, of which all complain, I will add four more, that are very *contemptible*, but much admired: for though they have no bodily bulk, their wisdom is exceeding great, and very elaborate. See Arg. [*m*] [*pp*]

Ver. 25. *The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.*] First, the ants: who are a creature so infirm, that one crush of our foot kills multitudes of them, and yet so provident, as well as industrious, that they prepare granaries under ground, with wonderful art, to receive their food: which they gather and lay up in harvest-time; and secure it too, that it may serve for all the year. (See vi. 8.)

Ver. 26. *The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.*] Secondly, the mountain mice are a feeble sort of creatures also; but they have a leader to give them notice of any danger; and are so cunning, that they provide for their safety in high rocks: into which they have several entrances and outlets; that if they be assaulted in one port, they may escape at another. See Arg. [*n*]

Ver. 27. *The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.*] Next, the locusts, which herein indeed differ from the former, that they have no king to govern them: yet go forth like soldiers to battle, in good order; and when they fall upon the spoil, divide it among themselves without any quarrel or contention. See Arg. [*o*]

Ver. 28. *The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.*] Lastly (the spider, which weaves a curious web, or rather) the little spotted lizard, which takes fast hold even on the flat cieling of houses; and there goes (with its body hanging down into the air) in pursuit of its prey: which as it nimbly catches, so it intrudes itself to hunt for it even in kings' palaces. See Arg. [*p*]

Ver. 29. *There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going.*] And here, after the consideration of these four contemptible things, it will be fit to answer your last question, *What things are most stately?* and there are three, or rather four things, whose motion is majestic, and go after a goodly manner.

Ver. 30. *A lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any.*] First the lion, when he is come to his full growth; who is the most heroical and undaunted of all creatures; never turning his back for fear of the greatest multitude of hunters, or dogs, that set upon him.

Ver. 31. *A greyhound; a he-goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.*] Next to him a strong and generous *horse;* especially when he is girt and equipped (as we speak) for the battle: and then the *he-goat*, with his long beard; when he walks in pompous state before the flock: and, lastly, a prosperous *king*, of invincible courage; especially when he reigns in the hearts of his people, and marches at the head of an unanimous, victorious army, whom none dare rise up to oppose. See Arg. [*q*]

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Ver. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.*] If thy pride, or thy passion, hath engaged thee in some foolish action, whereby thou hast disgraced thyself; or made thee contrive and endeavour any thing that is unwarrantable; do not add one fault to another, by excusing it, or blaming any body but thyself for it; much less by quarrelling at those that admonish thee of it, and reprehend thee for it: but stop at the first motion to this, and silently acknowledge thy error. See Arg. [*r*]

Ver. 33. *Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood; so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.*] For from little things there is an easy progress unto greater. And just as you see milk is first pressed out of the cow's udder, and then being shaken in the churn is forced into butter; and as the nose being wrung, though at first it only purge itself, yet if it be harder pressed, there comes out blood: even so words, passing to and fro, raise a heat, and that, if continued, stirs up anger; and that, making men vehemently insist upon their opinion, or their desire, turns into scolding; and that, in the issue, grows up to quarrels, and irreconcilable enmities.

CHAP. XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

[*a*] It is generally taken for granted, both by Hebrew and Christian writers, that king Lemuel, whose mother gave him the precepts contained in this chapter, was Solomon; whom Bath-sheba took early care to instruct in his duty, being, as some of no small name fancy, divinely inspired with the gift of prophecy. But, as all this depends merely upon conjecture, and that without the least ground, so there is no good reason assigned why Solomon should here be called Lemuel; and not by the name he hath both in the beginning of the preface to this book, (Prov. i. 1.) and in the entrance of the first part, (x. 1.) and of the last collection also, (xxv. 1.) made by the men of Hezekiah: whom Grotius fancies to be the king here mentioned, under the name of Lemuel; only for this reason, that this chapter follows the collection of proverbs made by his servants: which hath no force at all in it; for the words of Agur follow more immediately; which he cannot ascribe to Hezekiah.

And therefore it is more reasonable to conceive this Lemuel to have been a prince in some other country; who had gathered some weighty sentences taught him by his mother (whose name is unknown), which it was thought fit to adjoin to the foregoing: because they are very wise, and of great moment; as if they proceeded from a prophetical spirit. And it is only the vanity of the Jewish nation, who would enclose all wisdom within the bounds of their own country, which hath made them ascribe that which follows in this chapter to Solomon and Bath-sheba. For which, as I said, there is no colour; but it appears by the history of the queen of Sheba, and the embassies which came from the kings thereabout, who sent to hear the wisdom of Solomon, (1 Kings iv. *ult.*) that there were even in those times great persons very inquisitive after knowledge, as there had been, in the times foregoing, in those eastern countries, and in Egypt; which was famous for wise men, 1 Kings iv. 30. where we read of the *wisdom of the children of the east* (*i. e.* Arabia, where Job, a considerable prince, and the rest of his friends, lived in former ages), and the wisdom of Egypt. Of which country some have thought those famous men to have been, who are mentioned in the next words, (ver. 31.) where this demonstration is given that Solomon's wisdom excelled all the wisdom of those countries; *For he was wiser than Ethan, the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda,* &c. upon which words Gasper Sanchez notes, That the Seder Olam says, *These were Egyptian wise men.* But it is not good to take things upon trust; for I find upon examination of the place (which is chap. 20. of the greater book of that name) that it saith no such thing, but only this, that *the sons of Zara, Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda,* (mentioned 1 Chron. ii. 6.) *were prophets, who prophesied in Egypt.* But however this be, that very book acknowledges in the next chapter, that *there were prophets in other countries before the law of Moses was given: though after the delivery of it, the Holy Spirit,* they fancy, *forsook all the world but them; immediately upon the speaking of those words,* Exod. xxxiii. 16. xxxiv. 6. For which assertion, as there is not the least shadow of reason, so, supposing it were true, it must notwithstanding be confessed that there remained still among other nations many excellent and wise persons both men and women: who had such communication also with the Jews, that many of them were proselyted to their religion: which might have countenanced their authors if they had said (and it seems to me a better fancy than any they have) that Lemuel's mother was a Jewish lady, married to some prince of another country, by whom she had this son; and took care of his institution in the wisdom of her people.

And by the use of the word *bar* three times for a son, in the beginning of this instruction, (which is no where used in this book before, nor in the whole Bible more than once, Psal. ii. 12.) one would guess this Lemuel to have been some great person in Chaldea. For in the next verse also (ver. 4.) we meet with the word *melachin (kings),* according to the termination in the language of that country.

[*b*] But this is all uncertain, and therefore I proceed no farther in it: but only note, that whosoever was the mother of Lemuel, she was mightily solicitous to have him do well: as appears by ver. 2. Which some think to be a passionate expression, when she saw him begin to incline to evil courses; as if she had said, *What dost thou mean, my son,* &c. But it is more likely that it proceeded from a tender concern for his well-doing, as soon as ever he grew up; whilst he was yet innocent and untainted. And that he might so continue, she gives him three, or rather four, of the most proper advices that could be thought of for a prince.

[*c*] First, to subdue that lust which she knew to be very violent in youth; especially in young kings; who have more provocations, and are apt to take more licence, than other men: but bring thereby such mischiefs upon themselves and their kingdoms, as are not to be repaired; but often end in their destruction, (ver. 3.)

[*d*] In order to this, she admonishes him, in the second place, to avoid drunkenness; and to preserve himself

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perfectly sober; whereby he would be fit also for counsel; and be able likewise to give a right judgment when causes are brought before him; (ver. 4.) which some extend so far, as to think she would not have him drink any wine at all, or other strong liquors (of which there were several made of honey, or dates, and divers other things; which go under the name of *schechar*). But it is more reasonable to look upon it, to caution against excess: which is dangerous in all men, but especially in those that are to govern others as well as themselves. For then they blurt out the greatest secrets, as the Vulgar translates the latter part of the verse; or grow furious and outrageous, as the LXX. translate the same passage: but both of them without any ground that I can see in the Hebrew text.

[*e*] In which follows (ver. 5.) the true reason of this prohibition; and then an account (ver. 6.) of their condition, to whom a larger quantity than ordinary, of wine or strong drink, is fit to be allowed. Not to *kings*, who have innumerable ways to relieve their cares, and to divert themselves, when any thing troubles them: but to poor miserable people, that are ready to faint under their heavy burdens and oppressions. For whom this is a present relief; and the only one sometimes they are capable of; when they are in a very melancholy condition. And they that are of such a temper, or are otherways made exceeding sad, can better bear a great deal of wine, without any disorder, than the sanguine, and they that are gay and merry. There are those that, by *men ready to perish*, have understood such as were *condemned to die*, and *going to execution*. Unto whom it was the custom to give a draught of wine, to support their spirits; and in the degenerate ages of the Jewish commonwealth, they put something into it to intoxicate the poor wretches, so that they might be insensible of pain. And some imagine this custom took its original from this place in the Proverbs; though it be not the true sense of the words. For the latter part of this verse, and that which follows, (ver. 7.) give the best explication of the first: and they shew she speaks of those that were *miserably poor*. And so the best Hebrew expositors interpret those words, Deut. xxvi. 5. My father was a Syrian, *ready to perish:* that is, extreme poor; and in want of all things.

[*f*] And thus having enlarged this second advice a little, she passes to the third: which is, (ver. 8.) to take such care that justice be exactly administered (without which no kingdom can subsist), as himself to undertake the defence of those, who were in danger to lose a good cause; for want of an advocate to plead it for them, or to open the true state of it, &c. Especially, she commends to him the patronage of *strangers, orphans,* and *poor indigent people*. The first of which, in the Hebrew, are called *children of change;* or *that are passed by:* that is, persons who *have changed their country;* or, that are in danger to *suffer grievous alterations* in their condition, if right be not done them; or, *who are deserted by all,* and have none to stand by them. Several other ways there are to explain the phrase; but to the same purpose.

[*g*] But the great care of parents being to see their son well married, she concludes with the description of such a wife, as she would have him seek: which takes up the rest of the chapter, from ver. 10. to the end. And it is in the form of a *poem* (as St. Jerome takes it), consisting of a sort of iambic verses: each of which begins with a new letter of the alphabet in order; the tenth with *aleph,* the eleventh with *beth,* and so to the bottom. Which was an elegant sort of composure among the ancients, and a help to memory also; as we see in several Psalms, and other parts of Scripture.

Now whether she composed these verses herself, or got her sense expressed by some eminent poet, cannot be known; nor is it material. But I do not think fit to follow the conjecture of Huetius, (in his late Demonst. Evang.) who imagines the words of Lemuel's mother to end with the ninth verse: and here to begin a distinct composition of some other person: suppose Solomon. For though this following poem be disjoined from the foregoing words in the LXX. and differs herein from the rest, that in the beginning of every verse the order of the Hebrew alphabet is observed: yet there being no words in the head of it as there are in chap. xxx. and the beginning of this chapter, to denote it to belong to another author, I take it to be of the same piece with the first nine verses. That is, to be a copy of verses, delivered to Lemuel by his mother, in commendation of an excellent woman: which, perhaps, she did not make herself (though there be no proof of that, and both Deborah and Hannah we find were poets), but, notwithstanding, being recommended to him by her, would, she thought, have the same authority with him, as if she had been the author. And it is very observable, that the general character of such a woman as she would have him marry, is *escheth chajil,* a *virtuous woman,* we translate it. Which word *chajil,* signifies both *strength* (or rather *valour* and *courage*) and *riches* and *virtue*. And, in the description of fitting persons for the magistracy, Jethro, in general, saith, they should be *anschee chajil,* (Exod. xviii. 21.) which we translate *able men:* and then follows more particularly wherein their *ability* should consist, *such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness*. I take, therefore, *escheth chajil* to include in it a great *fear of God,* (mentioned afterward, ver. 30.) which is so powerful, as to endue one with courage to do well, when piety is contemned; nay, laughed at and abused: I have not therefore omitted this among other words, to express the force of this phrase.

[*h*] And then follow, after this, abundance of other good qualities, which are included in this: such as chastity; and such a care of her husband's estate, that he might have a perfect confidence in her management; love to him without moroseness; diligence in all household affairs; frugality; gentleness in the government of her family; a prudent care in the education of her children; and in setting all the family to some employment or other; and increasing also her husband's estate, and yet giving liberally to the poor; affability and courtesy to all, &c. Which excellent endowments if her son found in a wife, she knew it would be a certain means to preserve him from following other women, (ver. 3.) when he took perfect delight in her company: and from *drunkenness* also, (ver. 4.) which few fall into who entirely love their wives, and study to please them in all things: for they generally abhor this loathsome vice. In order to this, she would have him marry such a one, as he could per-

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fectly confide in; and never in the least suspect of any levity, or unfaithfulness, or carelessness, when he was abroad; (ver. 11.) and would never be cross to him; but always loving, and kind, and pleasing, when he was at home, (ver. 12.)

[*i*] An excellent housewife also; prone to take any pains herself, that she might give a good example to others: particularly in the linen and woollen manufacture; in which the greatest women, it appears by ancient authors, constantly employed themselves heretofore, with such diligence, as is highly praised in their books, ver. 13. where, to express her propension to this work, he ascribes a *willingness* and *forwardness* to her hands; just as, Prov. xxi. 25. he makes the hands of the sluggard to be averse to labour.

[*k*] Which turns to a great account, she shews, both in foreign commodities, (ver. 14.) and in the purchase of land, (ver. 16.) which the good housewife herself views, and walks about with great expedition, (ver. 17.) tucking up her garments (as we speak) that she may be fit for motion every where: and not minding fine clothes more than her business, nor, for fear of spoiling them, neglecting that; but preferring strength in her arms acquired by labour, before the ornaments wherewith they are wont to be adorned.

[*l*] The profit of which she finds is so great, that it makes her love labour better than sleep; and when there is haste of work, to continue it all night: so ver. 18. may be expounded.

After which follows (ver. 19.) another instance of humble greatness. Then her charity to the poor, (ver. 20.) her care of her own family, (ver. 21.) where the last word having different senses, I have expressed them all in the Paraphrase.

[*m*] And then is wisely mentioned (ver. 22.) her magnificence in the hanging of her house, and of her bed, and in her own apparel: which was the more allowable when the poor were not neglected; and the decking herself and house, did not make her forget their necessities. The particular words there, I have not room to explain. Nor those which follow, ver. 23. (after she had mentioned the honour her husband would get by such a wife, ver. 24.) for I think it is needful to give a brief account of ver. 25.

[*n*] Which seems not unfitly translated by Castalio to this sense: *that she being thus amply provided, and fortified, as it were, against all accidents; need not fear any want in future times.* But considering what follows, (ver. 26, 27.) I have chosen only to touch on that sense; and to take the *strength and honour* for the excellent qualities belonging to her: which I have called her *principal ornaments;* because the Hebrews are wont to express that which adorns any person, and is most proper to them, by the name of *clothing:* as Psal. cxxxii. 9. "Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness."

[*o*] The rest I must wholly omit, and only observe, that *the fear of the Lord* in the conclusion, (ver. 30.) is the foundation of all these virtues (which will either not be found, where there is no devout sense of God; or not be constant and equal, but vary as several passions govern and rule their spirits), especially when it is in such a high degree, that a woman values herself for *fear of the Lord,* more than any thing else. So the LXX. translate it; *A prudent woman is commended; but she praises the fear of the Lord:* which may have this sense also, that *her virtues commend religion unto others. Religion itself is honoured by her excellent virtues:* which are so exemplary, that they make others in love with them, as well as with her.

I conclude all with the observation of Melancthon, that this description, which he calls "Speculum honestæ matronæ," is altogether simple and plain, without any such allegories as Simonides used, who said, "he was happy that married a wife like a bee:" and that all this, in a manner, is comprehended by the apostle in those words, 1 Tim. ii. *ult.* She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue *in faith,* and *charity,* and *holiness, with sobriety. Faith,* saith he, is the acknowledgment of the true God, and confidence in his Son Jesus Christ (that is, belief of the whole gospel), out of which springs the *love of God,* and from thence the love of her husband and children: and then *holiness* or *sanctification,* which is that virtue we call *chastity;* and, lastly, *temperance,* as he translates it, moderation in meat and drink; or rather, all manner of *sober behaviour,* and *prudence,* in the government of the family, and in the moderation of all sorts of expenses, &c. Which things the apostle particularly mentions; because, in the enumeration of virtues, it is the manner of the holy writers to name those only, which are most proper and suitable to every one's state and vocation.

Ver. 1. *THE words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.*] Unto those sayings of Agur, let these of king Lemuel be added and considered: which are weighty sentences also, (xxx. 1.) which his mother taught him with such authority, as if she had been a prophetess. See Arg. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*] And with no less tenderness and affection also, saying, Hearken, my dear son, for whose well-doing, O how much am I concerned! I want words to express the care I have about it: I am at a loss how to instruct thee according to my wishes: what shall I desire thee to do for my sake, who endured so much for thee; when I carried thee in my womb, and brought thee forth from thence? what shall I pray thee to do? for whom I have made so many prayers to God; and vows too, if I might but see thee come safe into the world, and grow to be a man, and sit upon a throne. See Arg. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.*] In the first place, let me prevail with thee, as thou lovest me, and as thou lovest thyself, to be chaste in thy desires of bodily pleasures, and not to give up thyself to follow thy lust after women; which will destroy the strength of thy body, weaken thy mind, and exhaust thy treasures: that is, engage thee in such courses as are the bane of kings; and, by making them neglect their government, have brought many of them and their kingdoms to utter ruin. See Arg. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink.*] And next to this, O Lemuel, kings of all other men, kings, I say, should be sparing, very sparing, in the use of wine, and of all

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other intoxicating drink: and so should their counsellors, and commanders of armies, and judges, and all other ministers and officers. See Arg. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.*] For they may injure more than themselves, when they are in drink. If a cause, for instance, be brought before a prince or a judge, and his thoughts are confused by the fumes of wine, he may quite forget the standing rules whereby he ought to determine it: and things appearing to him quite otherwise than they are, he may not only judge amiss, but unjustly condemn those that ought to have been acquitted; and undo poor and afflicted people, by giving away their right, when the comfort of their whole life depends upon his justice.

Ver. 6. *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts.*] If the liberal use of wine and strong drink is to be indulged to any body, it is to those miserable wretches, and the meaner sort of persons: whom it may be charity to comfort therewith when they are in danger to perish, for want of the necessary snpports of life; or are oppressed with grief and sorrow in any other deplorable condition. See Arg. [*e*]

Ver. 7. *Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.*] Then bring forth plenty of wine, and set it before such a disconsolate person: let him drink freely till he hath cheered his heart, and raised his drooping spirits, and be able to think of something else, beside his poverty and misery; nay, till he be so merry, as quite to forget the cares and wearisome labours that they bring upon him.

Ver. 8. *Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.*] And this is the third thing I beg of thee, to administer justice exactly to all thy subjects, and not merely commit the care of it unto others: but sit thyself upon the bench; and if thou seest a man in danger to lose his right, because he is not able to make it out, and, through fear, or ignorance, or want of elocution, cannot speak for himself, keep not silence, but undertake his defence; especially if it be the cause of strangers, who understand not the laws, and perhaps are in danger to suffer some great damage, in their bodies, credits, or estates. See Arg. [*f*]

Ver. 9. *Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.*] And when thou hast cleared the righteousness of their cause, fear not to pronounce the sentence boldly, according as the laws require: let no man persuade thee to admit delays; but bring the business to a speedy issue; that he who is poor, nay, a mere beggar, may neither be oppressed by doing him injustice, or by deferring to do him right.

Ver. 10. *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.*] And now, next to this, I shall commend a good wife unto thee: in the choice of whom, a singular care ought to be employed. But, alas! such a woman as I would have is scarce, and hard to be found. One that is not only industrious, but pious, and can command herself as well as govern her family: being enriched with all those virtuous qualities, which make her far more valuable than all the pearls of precious stones, that women love to be adorned withal. See Arg. [*g*]

Ver. 11. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.*] I can only give the character of her (which may serve to direct others, as well as thee, in their search after such a person), in whose chastity, as well as prudence, frugality, and fidelity, in ordering affairs at home, her husband hath such a confidence, that he may go abroad, and attend the public affairs; without the least care or solicitude what will become of his domestic concerns; and not be tempted to enrich himself, or supply his own necessities, with the spoil of other men. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 12. *She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.*] She will not only endeavour to answer his love with an equal affection, but to provoke and excite it, by pleasing him in every thing; and avoiding whatsoever is ungrateful to him: nay, by deserving well of him, and studying to promote the interest of him and his family, and to maintain his honour and reputation; and that not only by fits, and in a good humour, but all the days of her life; even after he is dead, if she survive him. See Arg. [*h*]

Ver. 13. *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.*] Idleness is so hateful to her, that she need not be desired to employ herself in some piece of good housewifery: but of her own accord sets up a linen and woollen manufacture: to which she applies her own hands so willingly, as well as dexterously, that it appears she delights in the work. See Arg. [*i*]

Ver. 14. *She is like the merchant's ships, she bringeth her food from afar.*] And therewith she maintains her family without expense, by carrying on a gainful traffic for foreign commodities (which she gets in exchange for these), as if her husband set out a fleet of merchant ships; to fetch them from far-distant countries.

Ver. 15. *She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.*] Nor doth she indulge herself in over-much sleep, but is an early riser, before the break of day; to make provision for those that are to go abroad to work in the fields; and to set her maidens their several tasks at home.

Ver. 16. *She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard.*] So far she is from wasting her husband's estate, that by her prudent management she continually increases it: first purchasing a field for corn, when she meets with one that she judges worth her money; and then, out of the mere product of her own labours, adding a vineyard to it, which she causes to be well planted.

Ver. 17. *She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.*] And as her diligence is unwearied, so she is neither slow in her dispatches, nor refuses any pains; but nimbly bestirs herself, and goes roundly (as we say) about her business: nay, exercises her arms to the strongest labours, both within doors and without. See Arg. [*k*]

Ver. 18. *She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.*] For finding, by sweet experience, not only how wholesome labour is, but what profit her traffic yields, she doth not conclude her work with the day; but continues it as much in the night as can be spared from necessary sleep. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 19. *She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.*] And she doth not think it beneath her quality to put her hands to the spindle: but twists the thread or the yarn with her own fingers; and winds them with her own hands.

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Ver. 20. *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*] Which she stretches forth with no less forwardness to relieve the poor: being not only for getting all she can, but for giving liberally, out of her gains, to needy people; whom she supplies cheerfully, as well as bountifully; and extends her charity not only to those who are near, but to those who are remoter from her.

Ver. 21. *She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.*] Yet such is her prudence withal, that her own family and domestic servants are in no danger to suffer hereby, in the hardest winter: for she provides them with change of raiment, for the several seasons, and with double garments when the weather is cold; nay, not only clothes them, but adorns them so, that they may appear in a splendid manner, when they are to wait upon her. See Arg. [*l*]

Ver. 22. *She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.*] The furniture of her house also is very noble, and her own apparel suitable to it: in which her greatness is not the less, but the more conspicuous; because they are of her own making. See Arg. [*m*]

Ver. 23. *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.*] And so are her husband's robes; which make him noted, when he comes into the courts of judicature, and sits among the senators of the country: who call him a happy man in such a wife, as doth him honour, and eases him of all his cares, but only those of the public business: which her wisdom, diligence, and prudent management, give him leisure wholly to attend.

Ver. 24. *She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.*] For such is her industry, that she exercises more arts than one or two, to enrich her family; making, for instance, very fine linen, with embroidered belts, and girdles curiously wrought; which she sells to the Phœnician merchant.

Ver. 25. *Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.*] But her principal ornaments are, the firmness, constancy, and vigour of her mind; her modest, comely, and decent behaviour; her generous and honourable way of dealing with every one: which (accompanied with the forenamed diligence, &c.) make her so happy, that they free her from all fear of what may be hereafter; and prepare her to meet old age, and death itself, with joyful satisfaction. See Arg. [*m*]

Ver. 26. *She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*] Unto which add this singular grace; that as she is neither silent nor talkative, so she loves not to talk of frivolous, but of serious things; of which, when occasion serves, she discourses pertinently and judiciously, not expressing her passion, but her wisdom: which shews itself not only in the constant softness and sweetness of her unprovoking language; but in the instructions and exhortations she gives unto doing good, exercising mercy, living peaceably and lovingly together; which is the lesson she inculcates every where.

Ver. 27. *She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*] But especially in her own family, where she narrowly observes the motions and manners of every one; whom she neither suffers to gad abroad at their pleasure, nor to labour at home without good instructions; but teaches them how to live as they ought; and by this, if she did nothing else, deserves the bread she eats.

Ver. 28. *Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.*] Happy are the sons of such a mother, whose care both of their good education and to make provision for them, excites them, when they are grown up, to extol her virtues: happy is the husband of such a wife, whom he can never sufficiently commend; but having recited all her praises, saith,

Ver. 29. *Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.*] Daughters may do much by their housewifery, but nothing like to the care of a virtuous wife; and of all the wives that have done worthily, and mightily advanced the state of their family, there were never any comparable unto thee; whose merits far transcend them all.

Ver. 30. *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.*] A handsome shape and graceful behaviour are very taking; and so are a good complexion and lovely features: but, alas! as the greatest beauty soon fades and vanishes, so many ill qualities may lie concealed under goodly looks (which will utterly spoil all the happiness that a man promised himself in such a choice); and therefore a truly religious woman, who dares not any way offend the Lord, is that amiable person, and she alone, who will please a man always, and deserve perpetual praises.

Ver. 31. *Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.*] Let every one extol her virtue, for I cannot do it enough; let her not want the just commendations of her pious labours; but, while some are magnified for the nobleness of the stock from whence they spring, others for their fortune, others for their beauty, others for other things; let the good deeds which she herself hath done be publicly praised in the greatest assemblies; where, if all men should be silent, her own works will declare her excellent worth.

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ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER.

WITH ANNOTATIONS ON EACH CHAPTER.

PREFACE.

I. THIS book, not carrying in the front of it the express name of Solomon, it hath emboldened some to take the liberty of entitling other authors to it. Hezekiah, for instance, whom the Talmudists make to speak those words in the entrance of it, *The words of the Preacher*, &c. or Isaiah, as R. Moses Kimchi, with some other Jews, fancy: or, to name no more, Zerubbabel, whom Grotius (in his notes upon chap. xii. 11.) conjectures to have appointed certain men to make this *collection*. For so he would have the word *Coheleth* translated a *collector*, or heaper up of opinions, rather than a *preacher*.

II. But there are so many passages in the book which agree to none but Solomon, that it is a wonder so great a man as Grotius should be led away from the common opinion, by such slight reasons as I shall presently mention. For instance, there never was any body that could truly speak those words which we read ver. 16. of the first chapter, but only Solomon: for neither Hezekiah, nor Isaiah, nor Zerubbabel, kept such great state as he did, much less excelled him in wisdom: and who but he could boast of such things as are mentioned chap. ii. 4—9. to represent the splendour wherein he lived, above all that had been before him in Jerusalem? Or, on the contrary, who had such reason as he to make that sad complaint (chap. vii. 26, &c.) of the mischief he had received by women? And, to omit the rest, those words in the last chapter (ver. 9, 10.) can belong to none but him, who *set in order many proverbs*, as appears in the foregoing book.

III. Which things are so convincing, that Grotius is forced to acknowledge that Zerubbabel caused this book to be composed in the name of king Solomon (for he was no king himself, but a governor under the king of Persia), repenting of his former vain and sinful life. Which very acknowledgment carries in it a plain solution of the principal argument, whereby he was led to this odd opinion: which is, that he finds some words in this book that are no where to be met withal, but in Daniel and Ezra, and the Chaldee interpreters. Which makes it probable, he thinks, that it was written after their captivity in Babylon. But supposing Solomon to write here as a penitent, after he had frequented the company of many outlandish women, (of whom we read 1 Kings xi. 1, 2.) it need not seem strange to us that he had learned the use of many of their words. And so, notwithstanding this objection, he may still be thought to have been the author of this book himself: which the Hebrews generally conceive to have been written by him, towards the end of his reign, after he had tried all manner of pleasures, even to an excess. Besides, in other books of Scripture there are words, for the signification of which we are fain to have resort unto other languages; and particularly the Arabic, because they are not to be found elsewhere in the Scripture; and yet, for all that, might be pure Hebrew, according to the language which was then spoken, when such books were written.

IV. But it is not fit to stay any longer in the confutation of such a weak reason as this; which hath no force in it (though it be the best he hath), to make us think of any other author of this book than Solomon. Who, if he did not write it himself, it is certain spake the things contained in it: and calls himself the *Preacher*, because of the great gravity and dignity of the subject whereof he treats; of which he was wont to speak frequently, (chap. xii. 9.) desiring it might be understood and laid to heart by the *whole congregation* of Israel, as the word *Coheleth* seems to import; which, in the Ethiopic language, signifies a *circle*, or a company of men gathered together in the form of a *circle*, as Ludolphus hath lately observed. For the scope of this discourse is concerning the *chief good* or happiness of man: the *great end* he should propose to himself all his life long. Which is not that he shews which men generally follow; but that which is generally neglected. For most men mind nothing but just what is before them; which they will find at last, as he had done by sad experience, to be mere vanity; utterly unable to quiet their minds. Which must therefore seek for satisfaction in something else; and, after all their busy thoughts, designs, and labours, come to this conclusion: that to *fear God and keep his commandments* is the happiness of man; who ought, therefore, to use all the pleasures of this world (which is the only good it can afford us), with a constant respect to the future account we must all make to God.

V. This, it appears, by the beginning and the end of this book, is the scope of it. Unto which they that will not attend, are wont to pick out here and there a loose sentence, which agrees with their desires; and then please themselves with a fancy, that they have got Solomon on their side, to help to maintain their infidelity: not considering what he asserts directly contrary, in other places, where he presses the greatest and most serious reverence to almighty God, (iv. 17. v. 1, &c. viii. 12, 13. xii. 13.) together with a remembrance of the future judgment; (iii. 17.

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xi. 9. xii. 14.) works of mercy and charity also, whereby we may do good to others; (xi. 1, &c.) and the contempt of those frivolous pleasures, which draw our hearts from God and from good works, (ii. 2. vii. 2, &c.) All which plainly shew, that those words which seem to countenance men in the neglect of religion, and open a gap to licentiousness, are only opinions which he intends to confute, according to the method he had propounded to himself in this book. Wherein he first represents the various ends men drive at; which in the very entrance of it (that men might not mistake his meaning) he pronounces to be so vain, that he had no words significant enough to express their vanity; and then, their different opinions about God, and his providence, and their own souls: and what thoughts he himself had tossed up and down in his mind; which at last came to that resolution I mentioned before, wherewith he ends his book. In the close of which, to give the greater weight unto what he had said, he adds this: that these were not only the result of his own thoughts, but the judgment of other wise men, with whom he had consulted.

Let no man therefore deceive himself (to use the grave words of Castalio), as some, I wish I could say a few, have done: who not minding the end and drift of this book, but having met with some one place in it that seems to favour their beloved lusts, lay hold on that scrap alone; and with that, endeavour to defend their licentious course of life. As if they expected, they should find God just such a judge hereafter, as they are of themselves at present.

VI. To comprise all in a few words. The sense of the whole sermon, as we may call it, seems to be comprehended in this syllogism:—

Whatsoever is vain and perishing cannot make men happy;

But all men's designs here in this world are vain and perishing:

Therefore, they cannot by prosecuting such designs make themselves happy.

The proposition is evident in itself, and needs no proof. The assumption therefore he demonstrates in the six first chapters, by an enumeration of particulars; as I shall shew in the Argument before, or Annotations upon, each chapter: and then proceeds, in the rest of the book, to advise men unto the best course to make themselves happy; evidently proving all along, from this inconstancy and vanity of all things here, that he who wishes well to himself, ought to raise his mind above them to the Creator of the world: and expecting to give an account to him, so to demean himself in the use of all earthly enjoyments, that he devoutly acknowledge his Divine Majesty, fearing and worshipping him and doing his will.

Such, indeed, is the dulness of mankind, that, hearing all was but vanity, they might condemn every thing as evil and hurtful; and declaim too bitterly against this world. Which was so far from Solomon's intention, that having explained the vanity of all our enjoyments here, and the vanity of human cares, solicitous desires, and endeavours, he persuades all men to be content with things present, to give God thanks for them, to use them freely with quiet minds: living as pleasantly, and taking as much liberty, as the remembrance of a future account will allow; void of anxious and troublesome thoughts, what will become of them hereafter in this life.

VII. But it may not be amiss, perhaps, to give a larger account of this sermon; and let the reader see in what method it proceeds. For many men imagine it to be a confused discourse, which doth not hang together: and therefore have explained this book, only by giving an account of the meaning of each verse, as if it were a distinct sentence, independent of the rest; like those in his Proverbs. But Antonius Corranus, a most excellent person, in a small discourse of his upon this book, written above a hundred years ago, hath drawn such a scheme of it, as I believe will satisfy those who consider it, that Solomon proceeds after an exact order, to deduce what he intended: and therefore I will translate the sense of what he saith into English; which is to this purpose.

VIII. The design of the author is to find out and to shew, what it is in which the chief good and complete felicity of man doth consist. As appears by this, that reflecting upon various things in which men place their happiness; at the end of this discourse upon every one of them, he rejects them as utterly insufficient for that purpose, but continues his search so far till at last he finds it; and declares in the concluding epiphonema, that he had been seeking it through the whole discourse, saying, The sum of the matter is this, *Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man.*

Now there are two principal parts of the whole sermon. The first of which contains a recital and confutation of men's false opinions about their chiefest good: the other teaches, in what our genuine, true, and solid felicity lies; both in this life and in the next. In both he shews very diligently what is the end to which a man should direct all his counsels, studies, and endeavours; what he ought to follow as most desirable above all things; and what to avoid as the extremest of evils.

Of the first of these he treats in his six first chapters; of the other in as many more that follow: which is both a perspicuous and exact method. For being to treat of felicity, it was but fitting he should divide it into false and true; and then define aright what that true felicity is. For we must first shun that which is evil, and then pursue that which is good: according to the frequent admonitions we meet withal in the holy prophets.

The first Part.

IX. Now the first part of his sermon relies upon a proposition which nobody denies; *viz.* that vain, frail, and troublesome things cannot make any man happy: and such, saith he, in the very first words of the book, are all things here, *vanity of vanities*, i. e. extremely vain.

Which assumption it may seem hard to prove, if we consider what account blind mortals make of their own inventions, counsels, studies, and labours, by which they think to attain felicity. But to Solomon nothing was more easy; who having made a full and long experiment of all enjoyments here, most evidently demonstrates this by an enumeration of parts, and that in an apt, perspicuous, and compendious order. For he neither confounds the parts, too curiously pursues them, nor mentions all the false opinions of men about the chiefest good (which would have been too tedious, if, like Varro, he had told us of two hundred and eighty-five, and yet that he could not reckon all); but, reducing the most probable opinions unto four principal

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heads, he confutes them by various arguments; drawn chiefly from adjuncts and effects.

The first is of those who place blessedness in the knowledge of natural things, and in human wisdom, which begins at the twelfth verse of the first chapter, and reaches to the beginning of the second. For in the precedent verses, he only lays a foundation for his discourse, and plans his way to the proof of what he intended.

The second is of those who place it in pleasure; which he dispatches, as unworthy of a long confutation, in the three first verses of the second chapter. But there being those of this sect who, joining these two together, *pleasure* and *knowledge*, imagine they will make up a complete happiness, he spends more time in shewing their vanity; from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the sixteenth verse of the third: interposing only a parenthesis, wherein he compares *wisdom* with *folly*, and the effects of both shew how much the former is to be preferred before the latter.

The third touches those who think honours, magistracies, and power in the commonwealth, to be the highest of all goods. In which number are they who seek to extend their empire, though it be by a vast effusion of their own blood, by which means also they establish their tyranny, when they have acquired it. Which disputation reaches from the sixteenth verse of the third chapter to the ninth verse of the fifth. Yet so, that from the beginning of the fourth chapter to the thirteenth verse of the same, he inserts the miseries that grow from such tyrannical administration; and the vices which break in upon the impunity of evil-doers, and neglect of the laws. Particularly, he gives us a lively description of *emulation* and *covetousness;* two of the foulest and most cruel pests of the commonwealth. In the fifth chapter also he inserts a discourse of that superstitious and vain worship of God; in which some, despising all other things, place their satisfaction: and most lamentably applaud themselves in it. Which disputation contains in it some excellent precepts of true religion and piety; which the reader may find in the first eight verses of the fifth chapter.

After which follows the fourth opinion, of those who propound to themselves riches and wealth as their last end: which if they can attain, they doubt not they shall live very happily. Which extends itself from thence to the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter; where you have the general epilogue of the first part, concerning false felicity.

The other Part.

X. Then follows the second, and most elegant as well as useful part of the sermon. In which he teaches, that the felicity, for which men take so much pains (every one going his own way to it), is not to be found any where but in a religious and serious fear of God: according to that of the Psalmist, "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord; that walk in his ways;" and again, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; that delighteth greatly in his commandments." For other things, though they promise felicity, yet they cannot perform it; because they have such a mixture of vanity, trouble, and grief with them, as will not suffer them to be absolutely good; and because, if they were sincere, yet they being so uncertain, that they may be lost before we die, and at the best are terminated within the narrow bounds of this short life; they cannot give that satisfaction and quiet of mind which we desire. But the fear of God is such a good, that it both gives true content, satisfaction, and tranquillity of mind, as long as we live; and when we die, fills us with a sure hope of a better life; in which true and genuine felicity is accomplished.

For the sum of what can be said in this matter may be reduced to this argumentation:—

That which can make a man's mind quiet, still, and calm, both in life and death, that alone can make him happy:

Now this the fear of the Lord can do for him, and this alone; therefore this, and nothing else, will make him a happy man.

The proposition needs no proof: for then we feel ourselves happy, when our minds are so quiet and well pleased; that they neither grieve, nor fear, nor solicitously desire, nor vainly hope for uncertain things; but rest satisfied in that excellent and most certain joy and hope, which arise out of a pure conscience.

The assumption is proved from two effects of the fear of God, *viz. wisdom* and *justice*. The first of which teaches us what to follow, and what to fly; and furnishes us with such caution, that we be not imposed on, in the choice of that which seems to be good for us. The other instructs us to do our whole duty towards God, towards our neighbour, and towards ourselves. In which two all religion and piety, together with satisfaction, tranquillity, and felicity, are contained.

And because effects are more known than their causes, and it would be uncertain what he meant by the fear of God, unless he explained it by those things wherein it consists; he begins his disputation on this subject with those effects; and employs himself wholly in shewing what are the offices of *wisdom* and *justice;* that he might inform us not only what is the chief good to which we ought to aspire, but by what ways and means we may come to it.

XI. Of *wisdom* and *prudence*, therefore, which are conversant in the choice of things, he treats in the first place, chapter the seventh; because no man can act either righteously, or valiantly, or temperately, unless, by the benefit of prudence, he be before instructed what force they are unto our happiness. He explains, therefore, its various offices in such documents as these: that a good fame is to be desired above all things; that death ought to be the subject of our frequent meditations; that those things are to be avoided which incite to pleasure, and the contrary to be followed, which admonish us to be modest and sober; that severity and gravity are to be preferred before mirth; chastisements and corrections to be willingly admitted; flattery and soothing people to be cashiered; not to be too much disturbed at calumnies and reproaches; to take no bribes; to expect the issue and conclusion of things; to bridle anger, as an enemy to reason; to love the use of money, not money itself; and such-like: unto which, last of all, he adjoins a brief commendation of wisdom; rejecting both the larger explication of its effects, and its praises, to the end of the ninth chapter and beginning of the tenth.

Now this first part concerning *wisdom*, is handled in the twelve first verses of the seventh chapter.

XII. Then he enters upon the other, concerning *justice;* which he divides into that which respects God, and that which respects men. The former of which (comprehended

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under the names of *religion, piety,* and *godliness*) consists in this: That, in the first place, we conceive aright and judge well of God, and of his providence in the administration of human affairs; and then that we pay him that honour, worship, and service, which are due unto his Divine Majesty.

This discourse, which he touches upon from the thirteenth to the sixteenth verse of the seventh chapter, he resumes again in the eighth chapter, and pursues it from the ninth verse of it, to the thirteenth verse of the ninth chapter.

As for that justice which respects others it is manifold. For it is either towards men, or towards women: which consists, in a manner, altogether in shunning both the extremes of it, and observing an ἐπιείκεια, *moderation* or *equity:* and hath respect to their offences, either against ourselves or others: which we are partly to correct and partly to bear withal. Which is the sum of his discourse, from the sixteenth verse to the beginning of the eighth chapter.

Where interspersing a few things, after his manner, in the praise of wisdom, he begins another division of justice: concerning the duty of subjects to their princes, from the second verse to the eighth; and on the other side, the duty of princes towards their subjects: of both which it may be fit to give a larger account. For this *tractate* is truly royal, and worthy to be read perpetually, in this most turbulent age, both by high and low: that from hence subjects may learn to perform obedience, and the greatest observance both in word and deed towards their princes; choosing rather to bear and suffer any thing, than to attempt rebellion against them; and kings may also remember, that they ought to govern their kingdoms, according to the rules of law and equity, and not according to their own will and pleasure; God having committed unto them the sceptre of justice, clemency, and welfare of their subjects; not the sceptre of cruelty, tyranny, and destruction.

In which this wise king observing both princes and people to be too negligent, and that thence ariseth a very great licence in sinning, lest well-affected minds should be offended at this horrible corruption of manners; he digresseth into a long, but very profitable and necessary, disputation of God's providence, and the economy of justice. Which though the wicked deny and deride, because they see not such manifest difference, as one would expect, made between the good and the bad, in the events that befal them both; yet he advises all that fear the Divine Majesty not to be dejected and disheartened at this; nor to search with too much curiosity into God's secrets; but steadfastly resolving, that it shall not be well with the wicked, though all things flow at present according to their hearts' desire, and that whatsoever the godly may suffer now, they shall find at last that God is their friend; to look upon themselves therefore as happy men, both in the peace of their conscience in this world, and in a sure and certain hope of a better condition in the other. Upon which account he frequently inculcates this counsel, that they who are studious to fear God, and do well, being secure of God's administration, and of the event of things, should enjoy the present good things, which his Divine bounty bestows upon them; with cheerful minds, and with thanksgiving to him. This discourse (which it must be confessed is not altogether so methodical as some other) extends from the ninth verse of the eighth chapter to the thirteenth verse of the ninth.

And because he had shewn, that the event of things is not in our own counsel and in human wisdom, but in the hand of God, lest any body should be so weak or perverse, as thence to conclude, that it is the same thing, whether we act wisely or foolishly; he again makes a digression into the praises of wisdom; shewing how much it excels folly, from the effects of both. It begins at the seventeenth verse, and reaches to the fourth of the tenth chapter. Where he returns to his discourses, about the mutual offices of justice between one another, both of princes and subjects.

And then in the six first verses of the eleventh chapter, he exhorts most earnestly to liberality and almsgiving; which is no small part of righteousness. And with that he concludes the two effects of the fear of God, wisdom and justice.

XIII. The rest of the work is his peroration: in which he fully opens his opinion concerning the chief good; which he confirms to lie wholly in a truly religious fear of God. Which therefore he seriously exhorts every one to make his study as earnestly as is possible: before dull and inactive old age, and death itself (both which he elegantly describes), come upon us, and, before we think of it, oppress us.

This is the method of this most excellent sermon: which I cannot but exhort all men to study diligently, and with great intention of mind; both for the author's sake, and for the matter of it. Which he handles in such a manner, as, first, to draw us from the desire and love of earthly things, and from the perverse use of them: and then to lead us unto the true and lawful use of them, without any offence to God, as well as without hurt to ourselves. And he teaches us how we may, without a preposterous solicitude and anxiety about events, enjoy all things in the fear of God, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind at present; and, at last, by the same fear of God and observance of his commandments, arrive at a never-dying felicity.

To conclude, he intersperses through the whole discourse abundance of common places, both philosophical and theological; which are so fitted to make us every way more learned, more prudent, and more pious, that we shall find great use of them in all the passages of our lives.

XIV. Thus that learned Spaniard concludes his preface; which I have contracted, that I might set before the reader's eyes, in one short view, both the design and the procedure of the discourse. Of the former (the design) there is no doubt: and the latter is very regular, as it will farther appear, in the explication I shall give of it. Wherein I have not followed this author throughout, in every part of this division of the book; because, though for the most part I take it to be accurate enough; yet, I think, in several places I had reason to differ from him; and take another way to make the connexion more easy and natural, and the sense thereby more clear and evident.

I beseech God, that the pains I have taken herein may not be in vain; but prove an effectual means both to make the mind of Solomon in this book better understood; and to turn all our minds from these frivolous things, about which now they are too much employed, unto the solid

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and full good which here he recommends to us. Who may be the better trusted in what he saith; because he had tried what satisfaction could be found in all manner of enjoyments here: and it could not be objected to him that he disparaged the world, merely because he could not get any share in it, or had not the liberty which was necessary to enjoy it. For no man ever had greater plenty, or gave a greater loose to his desires; but, after all the experiments he could make, came to this resolution, which he had better have taken at first; that religion and virtue are the only things that can make a man happy.

And, perhaps, as God suffered St. Thomas to doubt of our Saviour's resurrection, for the greater confirmation of our faith, by the satisfaction he at last received; so he let this great man go astray, that by his dear-bought experience he might teach us this wisdom, to keep the closer to God in faithful obedience.

Which it will be a very great shame, if we do not learn, who live under the instruction of a greater master than Solomon, the Son of God himself. By whom we are taught these things in a more effectual manner; not only by his doctrine, but by his whole life and by his death: in which he declared the greatest neglect and contempt of this world; and that his mind was wholly set upon the other.

And what a blessed sort of resurrection would it be, if (as Erasmus somewhere admirably speaks) we would all lay aside our dissensions, strifes, and quarrels, and study the lessons our Lord hath taught us. Whose business it was in this world, to form unto himself "a people that should wholly depend on heaven, and, placing no confidence in any earthly support or comfort, should be after another manner rich, after another manner wise, after another manner noble, after another manner potent, in one word, after another manner happy: designing to attain felicity by the contempt of those things which are vulgarly admired. A people that should be strangers to filthy lusts, by studying in this flesh the life of angels; that should have no need of divorce, by being able to mend or to bear all manner of evils; that should be wholly ignorant of oaths, as those who neither distrust, nor will deceive any body; that make not the getting of money their business, having laid up their treasures in heaven; that should not be tickled with vain glory, because they refer all to the glory of Christ alone; be void of ambition, as disposed, the greater they are, to submit themselves, so much the more unto all men, for Christ's sake; that should be unacquainted with wrath, much more with revenge, as studying to deserve well of those who deserve ill of them; that should be so innocent in their behaviour, as to force commendations even from heathens; that should be born again to the purity and simplicity of infants; that should live like the birds of the air, without care and solicitude; among whom there should be the greatest concord, nothing different from that which is between the members of the same body; in which mutual charity should make all things common; that whether there were any good thing it should help to supply him that wanted, or any evil thing, it should either be removed or mitigated by the good offices of others; who should be so wise by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to live according to the example of Christ, as to be *the salt of the earth, the light of the world, like a city on a hill,* conspicuous to all the country round about; whose abilities, whatsoever they are, should make them forward to help others; to whom this life should seem vile, death desirable, out of a longing for immortality; who should neither fear tyranny, nor death, nor the devil himself, relying upon the invincible power of Christ alone, who should act in all things so, as to be ever prepared and ready for that last, and most-to-be-wished-for, day, when they shall take possession of true and of eternal felicity."

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

In the eleven first verses he lays the foundation of his following discourses, and makes his way to the proof of what he intends (*viz.* that nothing here can make us solidly happy), by shewing how empty all things are, and how short a time a man hath to possess them; and that while it lasts he can only enjoy the same empty things over and over again, till he be cloyed with them. And then (ver. 12.) he enters into a *particular* consideration of the insufficiency of *human wisdom* and knowledge alone, to give us full satisfaction: though this be one of the very best things wherein men place their felicity. Which discourse continues to the end of the chapter.

Ver. 1. *THE words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.*] These are the words of him, who thought the name of a Preacher, or public instructor of God's people (to whom he calls aloud in this book, to mind what he saith concerning the supreme good of man), no less honourable, than that of the son of king David: whom he succeeded in his throne; and reigned after him in the holy city Jerusalem. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity, all is vanity.*] That good of which you are all desirous, is not there to be found where you seek it; for all things here below are so frail, so subject to change, and to vanish, that I have not words to express how vain they are. This is the thing which the Preacher first undertakes to prove, that they are mere emptiness, more vain than vanity itself; so full of trouble and care, as well as extremely unstable, that to no purpose are all men's endeavours, who seek for satisfaction from them; especially if they place their highest good in them. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *What profit hath a man of all his labour which he takes under the sun?*] For proof of this, let every man survey himself; who consists of body and of mind. And let him ask his *mind*, what great matter there remains, after all its cares for the things of this life? what contentment he or any man else in all this world hath reaped by his toilsome labours, and anxious thoughts, wherewith he hath racked himself both day and night? which have often ended in disappointment; and when he hath enjoyed his desires, this very thing hath spoiled his pleasures, that he could not long enjoy them. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.*] For if they do not presently leave him, he in a short time must leave them: his *body* (the other part of him) being made out of

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the earth; and therefore, how firm and solid soever it now seems, must be crumbled into earth again. Which continues for ever, to receive back those bodies which come out of it: for no generation can abide as the earth doth; but follows the foregoing, as the next that comes after shall follow it, unto the grave. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 5. *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.*] Out of which they cannot return and stand up in their former places, as the sun, that quickens all things, doth: which in a constant and regular course ariseth, and makes no more speed to go down, than it doth to appear the next morning, in the same glory again. No; man dies, and appears here no more: though if he should, it would be to die again. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 6. *The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north: it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to its circuits.*] Nor is the annual course of the sun less certain than its diurnal; but it comes back the next year at a fixed time, to the very same point from whence it moved this. Nay, the winds, as fickle and inconstant as they are, whirling with a marvellous swiftness round the earth, return at last to the same quarter from whence they shifted (and some of them the very same months of the year), to fetch the same compass, and run the same round they did before.

Ver. 7. *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.*] The like circle there is in watery bodies; for the torrents and brooks, that the rain makes, run into the rivers, and so into the sea, which nevertheless doth not swell beyond its bounds, because it restores all back again to their former places, by the vapours which the sun exhales, or by the secret passages through the earth: whilst poor man alone (who is compounded of all these, of the earth, the air, the water, and such heat as the sun administers) passeth away and cometh to his place no more; but must be content to imitate these things, only in their restless agitations.

Ver. 8. *All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*] Which is another thing that increaseth his trouble; that in this short life, which he cannot live over again when it is done, he can neither be quiet, nor move with ease (as the things forenamed do), nor yet acquire satisfaction with his perpetual motion; but tries himself even in his pleasures; and finds all sort of business so laborious, that he himself is not able to tell how tedious it is; and after all is done, he is no better pleased than when he first began. For the eye (for instance) and the ear, which are the noblest and most capacious senses, having seen and heard all manner of things, are as desirous of some new entertainment, as if they had enjoyed none at all. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 9. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*] But, alas! the very same things (like the sun, the wind, and the rivers) come about again; and we are cloyed with seeing and hearing what hath often presented itself unto us already, or, at least, hath been in times before us, and will be again in those that succeed us. There is nothing done now, but (the persons being changed) will be acted over again in future ages; to whom the sun can shew nothing but what we have seen in these days, and others have seen in the foregoing. And therefore it is vain for any man to expect that satisfaction now or in future times, which none have found since the world began: men will always loath things present, as they have ever done; and long for those which are coming, which will ever give them the same satiety. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 10. *Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.*] Is any man able to contradict this and point us to the thing which is altogether new, and hath never been seen or heard of before? It may appear, perhaps, so to him; but that is to be imputed merely to the shortness of human life: which makes us ignorant of what hath passed in former ages (save only in a few things transmitted down to us by observing men). For had we continued many generations, that which now seems new and unusual to us, would have appeared familiar, and of great antiquity, as really it is.

Ver. 11. *There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.*] They that went before us, indeed, might have registered such things; but as they observed little, so they have left the memory of less: nor will this age, or those that follow, be more careful; or if they should, posterity will be as negligent as former ages have been, in preserving those records: for we differ nothing from our forefathers, nor will the ages to come excel this in which we live; but still the vanity of man, and of all his projects and contrivances, will continue to the world's end.

Ver. 12. *I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.*] And let none imagine that I speak this only as a *preacher*, in a zealous passion, much less in a melancholy mood; but remember that I have long sat upon a throne, ruling over God's own peculiar people, in that city which is the very school of wisdom; where I wanted nothing either for the body or the mind; and had both opportunity and ability to make trial of all things wherein men place their happiness, and therefore may be believed, when I declare nothing but from my own experience. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 13. *And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith.*] And being thus instructed with all the helps and assistances that the power of such a king could afford, I applied my mind, in the first place, and set my wits to work with all imaginable care and diligence, to search into the nature of all creatures here below; thinking I should be happy if I could but find out the causes, beginnings, and progress of things; especially the counsels, contrivances, and endeavours of mankind, with the event of all their actions. But, alas! I soon found that this was a tedious business, in which, when I had travelled a great way, I met with small satisfaction; nay, found it to be the torture of the mind, unto which God hath condemned mankind, as a punishment for their vain curiosity, and gross negligence of heavenly wisdom. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 14. *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*] And having now finished these studies, and taken a serious view

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of all that falls within the compass of human knowledge, I cannot say that they have given me any solid contentment: for we can know but little, and what we do know of natural things doth us small service: it puffs us up, indeed, like wind, but gives no nourishment; it fills us with notions, but of little or no use; and therefore vexes us at last, and breaks our heart to consider that we have spent so much time, and so many thoughts, which have even eaten up our spirits, to so little purpose. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.*] For as there are inextricable difficulties in all sorts of knowledge, of which no man can give an account; so, with all our study, we cannot have skill enough either to prevent misfortunes, or to remove out of the way that which crosseth our designs, much less to alter the nature of things (no, not so much as in our own constitutions), nor to redress the disorders in government: the defects in which, and in all other things and conditions, we are so far from being able to supply, that we cannot number them; and yet the folly of mankind represents every thing to their desires, as if it were completely good, and wanted nothing to make one happy. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 16. *I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.*] I myself still persisted in my reach after knowledge, though I found it so painful, and so unsatisfactory: thinking within myself, that there was this good at least in it, that it had gotten me a very great name, and raised me so high in all men's opinion, that I was noted for the wisest person that had ever been in these parts of the world, there being no sort of knowledge wherewith my mind was not stored in abundance. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 17. *And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.*] And, as the nature of all knowledge is to excite a thirst after more, this made me apply my mind more earnestly to comprehend, not only the greatest, but the meanest matter; to mark, for instance, the actions and occupations of madmen and fools, as well as the motions of wiser persons: but I perceived, that to be pleased merely with fame, was to live upon air; and it was an afflictive thought to observe, how little the most of the world (though they thought themselves very wise) differed from lunatics and distracted folk. See Arg. [*m*]

Ver. 18. *For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*] So that though knowledge be the most excellent of all other earthly goods, being the ornament of the mind, which is the best part of us, yet this also is insufficient for our happiness: because, after it hath cost a man infinite pains (and sometimes exhausted his spirits, and made him melancholy and morose, nay, thrown him into many diseases) to acquire that little wisdom he can attain; which raises also more doubts than it can resolve, and meets with troublesome opposition from various opinions that clash against it; it cannot but fill him with indignation to find folly generally applauded more than his wisdom, and grieve his very soul to see that it is dangerous for a man to know more than his neighbours; and that he is so far from being able to remedy what is amiss, that he is hated if he endeavour it; and rewarded with reproaches for his care of the public good. See Annot. [*n*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. The wisdom, virtue, and dignity of an author making his work more valuable and regarded; Solomon (or he who composed this book from what he heard him deliver, or found in his writings) begins with his quality; not merely as a king, and as the son of a great king, and of a great people, in a famous city; but, which was most considerable, as a public instructor, having ability and authority to inform all men where they should find that happiness, which they ignorantly sought, but could not meet withal. This he proclaims with a loud voice; desiring serious attention to such a weighty discourse, and that they would often recollect, as he had done, (all which may be the import of the word *Coheleth;* see Preface, Numb. IV.) how frivolous and trivial all those things are which most men pursue with the greatest earnestness.

[*b*] Ver. 2. This is the subject of this book, to shew how senseless it is to place our happiness in these frail and inconstant things, that we enjoy upon this earth: which he not only pronounces, but proves to be mere emptiness. So *vanity* signifies; and what is consequent upon that, dissatisfaction, trouble, and affliction. (See Psal. lxxviii. 33.) And this, beyond what can be expressed; for our translators take it to be a word of the same import with *tohu;* which is used in the Hebrew language, when they would signify that of which they speak to be so trivial, that it is below less than nothing, (Isa. xl. 17.) And yet Solomon is not content with this single word, but doubles it, to denote the extreme dissatisfaction he found in all things, which made a show of affording him contentment; but performed nothing of that which they seemed to promise. So the word *vanity* is also used for that which is also false, lying, and deceitful, Psal. lxxii. 9. and other places, where *idols* are called *vanities.*

[*c*] Ver. 3. Here begins the proof of his assertion; by considering first the mind of man: which runs from one thing to another without any end; but finds no satisfaction remaining from all its restless thoughts. And then the body of man, (ver. 4.) which, as proud and lofty as it now looks, must moulder into dust; and the poorest person, perhaps, shall tread upon its grave. For it cannot last like the earth from whence it comes; which stands for ever, as a public theatre, whereon men enter and act their part, and then go off, and never appear again: and when they go (as some prettily, rather than solidly, gloss upon the words, *the earth abideth for ever*) they can carry none of it along with them, but leave it all behind them, unto those that come after; who pass away also, leaving the earth where they found it.

[*d*] Ver. 5. The sun also, in a settled course, observes its times of rising and setting: whereas man, when he goes down to the earth, cannot, like the sun, come up again. So the fifth verse seems to be most naturally connected with the foregoing; and, in like manner, the sixth and seventh verses are to be expounded. There are many interpreters, indeed, who look upon the things mentioned in these three verses only as emblems of the instability of all human affairs, and of the constant revolutions of the same miseries: which cannot be hindered by any human counsels, but will

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return after all the changes, whereby we think to mend ourselves. Upon which sense I have just touched in my Paraphrase, but not followed it; because it doth not seem to me to be the scope of these verses. In which man is represented by four comparisons, with the *earth*, the *sun*, the *wind*, and the *sea*, to be more subject to vanity than other things.

[*e*] Ver. 8. Which having thus illustrated, he proceeds here more particularly to consider what he has said in general words, (ver. 3.) of man's vain endeavour to satisfy himself in worldly designs and contrivances; in which he is tired, but comes to no end of his desires. How should he? when his whole business here is only to enjoy the very same things over and over again: as all men have done before us, and shall do after us, (ver. 9—11.)

[*f*] Ver. 9. We may fancy, indeed, that we have found some new thing; but this conceit proceeds merely from our ignorance; as the Lord Bacon excellently discourses in his first book of the Advancement of Learning, chap. 8.

"Learning and knowledge (saith he) take away vain and excessive admiration; which is the very root of all weak counsels. For we admire things, either because they are *new*, or because they are *great*. As for *novelty*, there is no man that considers things thoroughly, but hath this printed in his heart, *There is nothing new under the sun*. Nor can any man much admire a puppet-play who doth but thrust his head behind the curtain, and seeth the instruments and wires whereby they are moved. As for *greatness*, we may say as Alexander, who, after his great conquest in Asia, receiving letters of some small fights or skirmishes in Greece, at the taking some bridge or fort, was wont to tell his friends, that *it seemed to him, that they had sent him news of the battles of Homer's frogs and mice:* so, certainly, if a man consider the universe and the fabric of it, to him this globe of earth, with the men upon it, and their busy motions (excepting always the divineness of souls), will not seem much more considerable than a *hillock of ants, whereon some creep up and down with their corn, others with their eggs, others empty; all about a very little heap of dust.*" And, as Melancthon well observes, the same desires, the same counsels, the same ends, the same causes, of war, and calamitous events, return again: according to Thucydides, *While human nature continues what it is, the like mischiefs will happen; sometimes less, sometimes more direfully.*

[*g*] Ver. 12. Thus having confirmed his main propositions, by such general arguments as reach to all things in this world; he proceeds here to a more particular proof of it, from his own proper experience. And designing (before he declared his own opinion of the chief good, and by what means it may be attained) to confute the vain fancies of men about it; he reduces them, as I have shewn in the Preface, to four heads. And observing that some place it in *knowledge*, and curious inquiries into all manner of things; others in *pleasure*, or in both these together; others in *honour* and *power;* others in *riches* and heaps of wealth; he begins with that which is the most plausible. And demonstrates, from the thirteenth verse to the end of this chapter, how little satisfaction is to be found in the mere speculation of things, though a man arrive at the highest degree of human knowledge.

[*h*] Ver. 13, 14. Melancthon restrains these two verses to political wisdom, in the government of kingdoms, which gives men a double affliction: first, in that the wisest men often err in their counsels; and, secondly, that events sometimes do not answer to the best counsels that men can follow. Examples of the first are innumerable: sometimes they err through ambition, as Perdiccas, after Alexander; sometimes through a false opinion of right, as Brutus; sometimes through over-doing, busy-headedness, and inquietude of mind, as Pericles; sometimes through anger, as Marius. And how many ways good counsels have miscarried, it is too long here to remember; because it is here farther observable, that sometimes mere doubtfulness and uncertainty of mind what course to take, is as great a torment to the mind as any other. Thus Pompey was first perplexed in his counsels, before he saw the disastrous event of his error. To conclude this; all government is full of cares, perplexities, and impediments, that it made Demosthenes say, If he were to begin the world again, he would rather die than be promoted to it. And Æschines, That he was as glad when he was rid of his office, as he would have been to be delivered from a mad dog.

But this I take to be too strait a sense; though it be agreeable enough to what he saith, ver. 12. of his kingly office; and therefore I have enlarged it farther in my Paraphrase; though Gregory Nazianzen also seems to have a respect to it, when he thus interprets this place, (Orat. lib. iii. p. 750.) *That all things here below are possessed with an uncouth and execrable spirit* (ἀλλοκότου καὶ μυσαροῦ πνεύματος), *so that a man cannot comprehend how absurdly all human affairs are managed.*

[*i*] Ver. 14. The word we translate *vexation* is found only in this book, and is capable of many senses, all pertinent to the scope of this place. For, according to the several fountains from whence it may be derived, this phrase may be interpreted, either *anguish* of spirit, or *breaking* of spirit, or *preying* upon the spirits, or (in another sense of the word *spirit*) *feeding on the wind or air:* none of which I have neglected in the Paraphrase.

[*k*] Ver. 15. The shortness of human wit, though never so much improved, is here represented by two things: first, that it cannot remove what is inconvenient: secondly, that it cannot supply what is deficient in any condition of life. Or, as others will have it, the first part of the verse refers to the inability of man to rectify that *perverseness* (as the Hebrew word we translate *crooked* signifies) which he finds in himself or others; and the latter part, to the small reach of human understanding, which can attain but a very imperfect knowledge, either of *words, things, times, persons*, or *actions;* as some branch out the innumerable particulars of which we must be content to be ignorant.

[*l*] Ver. 16. I have not curiously distinguished between *wisdom* and *knowledge*, either in this verse, or in the eighteenth. But there may be this difference pertinently made, that *wisdom* directs a man, in the practical affairs of life, unto that which is most fit for his purpose, according to the various circumstances wherein he may be. It consists chiefly in a clear judgment to discern our true interest, and the proper means to compass it; together with a presentness of mind, to obviate sudden accidents. And then *knowledge* relates to the speculation of natural things, in their causes and effects, their properties and differences, and such-like things.

[*m*] Ver. 17. *Madness* and *folly* may refer also to all the

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idle speculations, wherein men of parts and wit sometimes not only *employ*, but *applaud* themselves, as the first of those words seems to import in the Hebrew. This trifling sort of *knowledge* is notably described by Erasmus, in his Praise of Folly.

[*n*] Ver. 18. If there be any difference to be made between *wisdom* and *knowledge*, I have noted it above upon ver. 16. As for *grief* and *sorrow*, they may be thus distinguished, that the former, in the original word, includes in it *indignation*, which is a sharp *anger* mingled with scorn; to find either our persons and counsels contemned, or our projects and well-laid designs defeated. Such as was in Ahithophel; whose penetrating wit made his rage the greater, to see his judicious advice rejected, and the whole conspiracy utterly disappointed. The other word *(sorrow)* properly denotes an extreme great trouble and sickness of mind; and is sometimes applied to pains in the body; which is the effect too frequently of over-hard study. Melancthon understands the whole verse (as he did ver. 13, 14.) of the trouble that wise men have when they are entrusted with government, to see the confusions, errors, vices, and calamities of mankind. And their afflictions are the greater, because they are not only more sensible than other men of present evils, but foresee by the present those that are future; and therefore are tormented with a sore pain and grief, both for what they feel and for what they fear. For they know, that from the first disorders there commonly follow greater confusions: as when Pericles had once stirred up a war, there followed the destruction of almost all the great cities of Greece. And it is too truly said by Pindar, that *it is easy for any body to disturb a city; but God alone can restore peace unto it.*

This I take to be too limited a sense; but it is no small trouble to a wise and prudent person, as Corranus excellently expresses it, to behold the miserable disorders and confusion of human affairs. For how is it possible to avoid it, nay, how can a man choose but be filled with indignation to see justice, equity, probity, fidelity, integrity, and constancy, and all other such-like virtues, slighted and disregarded by mankind; and, on the contrary, injustice, baseness, perfidiousness, flattery, and such-like vices, possess the world, and carry all before them? Or what man can, without vexation, observe the preposterous judgment of mankind, which magnifies those things that are not only vain but hurtful and pernicious; and not only contemn, but hate, those things which are truly good for them; nay, alone desirable? no man can either be wise alone to himself, in such a multitude of fools and madmen, without the greatest grief and indignation: nor can he accommodate himself, with an equal mind, to the dotages of the common people, when he sees that which is better.

I shall conclude this chapter with the Lord Bacon's observation, concerning this anxiety of spirit which arises out of knowledge, in the beginning of his book of the Advancement of Learning:—

"Solomon (saith he) doth not pass this censure absolutely upon wisdom and knowledge, but only sets forth the true bounds, wherein human knowledge is to be circumscribed: which if we do not observe, it will prove very troublesome to us and others. And those limitations are three. First, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge, as to forget our mortality. Secondly, that we use not our knowledge to beget anxiety, but repose and contentment of mind. And, thirdly, that we do not presume by the contemplation of nature, to think ourselves able to comprehend the mysteries of God." The first and the last of these are plain enough; and therefore I shall only note what he saith of the second: that "it is certain, no anxiety or perturbation of mind ariseth from knowledge, but by mere accident. For all knowledge and admiration (which is the seed of knowledge) is pleasant in itself; but when we fall to frame conclusions from thence, which, obliquely applied to our own affairs, beget either weak fears or immoderate desires, then ariseth that torment and trouble of mind, whereof Solomon here speaketh. For then knowledge is no longer *dry light* (which Heraclitus was wont to say was the best), but *moist light*, steeped and infused in the humours of the affections."

As for that exposition which some have given of those words, that *he increaseth the number of his stripes (or wounds) who increaseth knowledge;* and maketh no use of it, nor takes care that his obedience rises in some good proportion with it; it is not the proper sense of the place, but rather an accommodation of the words to another profitable purpose.

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

Having passed his censure upon the first way men take to find satisfaction (mentioned in the notes upon ver. 12. of the first chapter), which without all contradiction is the chief, and the best of the four; he proceeds here to consider the second, which is the more common: most men immersing themselves in pleasure, as their highest good. Of which he was more capable to judge than any other man; because he denied himself no delights that he desired, and yet did not plunge himself wholly into them, but with a mixture of wisdom, as he tells us, ver. 3. Whereby he soon perceived, that they who leave the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of bodily pleasure change for the worse: for, after he had tried all sorts of things that could give him any pleasure, he went back to *wisdom* and *knowledge*, as the better of the two, (ver. 12.) And yet, after he had considered that again the second time, he could not but confess, that there were such great imperfections in it; that it could not make a man happy, as he discourses in the following verses. Of which I shall give a more particular account in the Annotations.

Ver. 1. *I SAID in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.*] Being thus disappointed, therefore, in the expectations I had of happiness from much wisdom and knowledge, and beholding many men look jollily who had none at all, I resolved to leave off those troublesome cares and labours, and to follow my pleasures: saying to myself, Why dost thou vex and torment thy mind to no purpose? let alone these crabbed studies which hasten old age, and indulge thyself in all those sweet delights which youth desires: try what satisfaction mirth and joy can give thee; and for that end take no thought for the future, but enjoy to the height the present goods of this life: which accord-

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ingly I did; but believe me, though this promised much at first, it performed little, but left me more void of contentment than it found me. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?*] For the noise, the tumult, the indecent motions, and scurrilous jestings, of men that let themselves loose to excessive laughter, and extravagant merriment, appeared to me like distraction of mind; and considering how unprofitable it is, I could not but with a passionate disdain put it from me; saying of it, and of mirth and dancing, and all the frolicness of mankind, What is there in it that thus bewitcheth them? where lies the pleasure that thus enchants them, and puts them so beside themselves; that they think neither of God, nor of any thing else that is worthy of them, but of this alone? See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom), and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.*] I deliberated, therefore, with myself about a middle course of life; which should neither be altogether studious, nor altogether voluptuous, but a mixture of both; and in pursuance of this counsel entertained myself freely, with all the delights of feasting and banqueting; yet so, as not to lose my acquaintance with wisdom, but to keep my mind so intent upon it, that folly might not have its full swing; but find a check upon it, till I might make a sufficient trial, whether herein lay that so-much-desired good which men should propose to themselves, and prosecute all the time of their stay in this world. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards.*] For which end I raised, with exquisite art, the most stately and magnificent works that could be contrived, for the pleasure of all the senses; as, first of all, I built myself a most magnificent palace, and other goodly houses; which when I had elegantly adorned and sumptuously furnished, I proceeded to plant about them, in a beautiful order, the choicest vines; (Cant. viii. 11.) which, besides the fragrant smell (ii. 13.) and the lovely sight, wherewith they entertained me abroad, afforded the most generous wines for my table at home. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits.*] To which I added delicious gardens, full of various flowers, herbs, and plants, for all the seasons of the year; and then spacious forests and parks, or rather paradises of pleasure, wherein, besides other delights, were lovely shades and coverts for all sorts of beasts: nor were orchards wanting, stored with all kinds of fruit-trees, which either this or other countries could afford. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.*] And that nothing might be wanting to the perfection or preservation of these places, I made with great charge, and no less art, either fountains, or cisterns, or pools of water; not only for delight and for fish, but to serve instead of rain, to water the flowers and herbs, especially the young nurseries of trees, that they might not die with drought. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me.*] All which requiring the care of a great many persons, I purchased servants, both men and women, in great abundance; of whom I had a multitude of children born in my house, whom I employed in looking after my other possessions, which I had in herds and flocks of greater and lesser cattle; which were so numerous, that I killed every day for my family ten oxen crammed in the stalls, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, with a hundred sheep; (besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl, to say nothing of other provision, 1 Kings iv. 22, 23.) and yet such was the plenty, my stock did not decrease, because a new brood grew up continually in such abundance as the like had never been seen in our country before my days. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*] By which, and divers other means, (1 Kings iv. 21. x. 21—23, &c. 2 Chron. ix. 24.) I laid up vast treasures of silver, and gold, and jewels, and all that was choice and precious in other kingdoms; especially in those provinces which were subject unto me, which were great and many; (1 Kings iv. 24.) out of whom I picked out also the sweetest voices that could be found, both of men and women; together with the rarest songs and hymns, composed by the best masters in the world; and all sorts of instruments of music; than which nothing is more charming among the children of men, either to lay them asleep when they would go to rest, or to recreate their spirits when they are tired with business; to banish melancholy when they are oppressed with sorrow, and to augment their pleasure when they would be merry: being no less fit to wait upon feasts, than they that attend at the table. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*] Thus I was not only great in place, and power, and riches, but, by such means as these, added splendour also to my greatness, and made it more conspicuous and illustrious: and (which is still more glorious) I was not greater in any thing than in wisdom; which was not undermined by all these pleasures; but, when they were in danger to dethrone my reason, this settled it again in its former state and authority. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour.*] And, on the other side, my wisdom did not lay such restraints upon me, but that I took the liberty to please my eyes, and all my senses, with every thing that fell within the wide compass of their desires: it did not deny me any joy to which I had a mind; but taught me rather to reap this as the sweet fruit of all my labours: there being nothing (it sheweth me) that came to my share of all that I had gotten with so much care and diligence, but only the free enjoyment of it; without which I had as good have been without it. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*] But then, after I had consi-

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dered seriously how small a thing this pleasure was, how short, and how often interrupted, and laid in the balance against it all the time I had spent, and the pains I had taken, in contriving these magnificent buildings, gardens, paradises, and all the rest, it seemed to me as nothing; and I cannot but leave this observation behind me, that all this is empty and unsatisfying to the spirit of man; and there is also much vexation and torment in it, to see how cross things go many times to our desires, how negligent they are who should look after such great works as mine were; but especially in this, that a man can reap so little benefit and so transient, from such vast and long labours, (i. 3. 14.) See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which has been already done.*] Wherefore I began to reflect upon my former thoughts, and to turn them back again towards wisdom, as the only good of man, (i. 13. 17.) and especially that wisdom which moderates our pleasures, and keeps them from running into madness and folly (and who is there that can give a better account of this than I? who have had such advantages above any private man to know the history of former times, as well as of my own, that I am confident they who come after can pass no other judgment upon things than I do now).

Ver. 13. *Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.*] For I clearly discerned, that there is as wide a difference between wisdom and folly, as there is between the light of the sun, which beautifies the whole world, and shews all things distinctly to us, and the darkness of the night, which wraps up all in dismal confusion, and hides even our dangers from us.

Ver. 14. *The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.*] Whence it is, that a wise man, having this light in his mind, looks before him, and round about him; which makes him cautious and well aware of dangers, into which a blundering fool, whose mind is blinded with the sottish love of pleasure, falls rashly and inconsiderately: and yet with all his circumspection (so imperfect are all things here, in which we place our happiness), the wisest man is not able to avoid a great many calamities, which are common to the whole race of mankind.

Ver. 15. *Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.*] Which reflection made me sigh, and think with myself; If notwithstanding this excellence of wisdom above folly, the very same diseases, loss of children and friends, and innumerable casualties, happen unto me, even unto me who know so much, that there do unto a fool; to what purpose have I taken all this pains, and studied so hard to be wiser than he? and upon this review of all that wisdom can and cannot do for us, I concluded again the second time, that there is a vanity also in this; which makes it incapable of giving us full satisfaction. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 16. *For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall be forgotten: and how dieth the wise man? as the fool.*] For as both wise and foolish are alike subject unto death, so, when they are dead, their names live not long after them, but they and all their famous achievements are forgotten; there being few of those things which are now done, that will be so much as thought of in the next generation; much less in future ages, when the memory of them will be utterly lost, and cannot be recovered: and is not this a lamentable case, that a wise man hath no more privilege than a fool, either from death, or from its inseparable companion, oblivion? See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 17. *Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*] This put me quite out of love with life, because the toil and labour of it are so great and grievous; and the pleasure it yields either interrupted and spoiled by many unforeseen accidents, or quite taken away by death, which leaves no footsteps of us behind us: for nothing is constant or of long continuance, nothing solid, nothing satisfactory here, but all our enjoyments leave us as empty, as he that feeds only upon the wind; nay, it torments us to see that we must take great pains too, for such weak and fading things, (i. 14.)

Ver. 18. *Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.*] And besides all this, there are other reasons which made me despise all those goodly structures which I had erected, and those beautiful works which I had contrived; (ver. 4—6, &c.) because, as I cannot keep them long myself, so I must leave them to I know not whom, to a stranger, perhaps, who without any pains of his enjoys the fruit of all my labour.

Ver. 19. *And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.*] Or, if my son succeed me in the possession of them, there is no man can assure me, whether he will wisely preserve and improve what I have gotten, or foolishly squander all away; in short, whether he will prove a worthy or an unworthy inheritor of my labours: and yet, such as he is, he must have an absolute power over all that I leave, to dispose of it as he pleaseth; and sottishly, perhaps, to waste in a little time, what I, with prudent care and diligence, have been heaping up all my life long. This is a great addition to human misery; and renders even the study of wisdom very vain, which cannot find a remedy for these evils.

Ver. 20. *Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.*] Which are so great, that, instead of pursuing my designs for this world, I turned my thoughts the quite contrary way; and like one perfectly tired, I concluded it best to leave off all farther cares about any thing here; despairing to reap any satisfaction from all my labours; particularly, to attain any certainty what kind of man he will be who shall inherit them.

Ver. 21. *For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein, shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity, and a great evil.*] For what hath happened to others may to me; who have observed a man no way defective, either in wise contrivance, or prudent management, or upright dealing, but as eminent for honesty, as he was for diligence; whose estate fell to the share of an idle person, nay, of an ignorant, silly, unjust, and ungrateful wretch;

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who prodigally consumed upon his lusts that which cost him no pains, not so much as a thought to acquire. This likewise, it cannot be denied, is not only a dissatisfaction, but a torment, nay, a great torment, to the mind of man.

Ver. 22. *For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?*] Who may well say, To what purpose is all this toil of my body, and these solicitous thoughts and anguish of my mind? For all that a man can enjoy himself of the anxious labours wherein he spends his days, amounts to little or nothing; and what comfort hath he in thinking who shall enjoy the fruit of them hereafter?

Ver. 23. *For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.*] And yet, such is our folly, there is no end of our cares; for we see many a man whose life is nothing but a mere drudgery; who never is at leisure to enjoy any thing that he hath, but still engaged in one troublesome employment or other to get more; which he follows so eagerly, as if it were his business to disquiet and vex himself, and make his life uneasy to him; being not content with his daily toils, unless he rack his mind also with cares in the night, which invites him to take some rest. This is so void of all reason, that nothing can be imagined more vain and foolish.

Ver. 24. *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*] Nor can any man reap the benefit of his labours, but by studying first to free his mind from over much care and anxious thoughts: and then (instead of heaping up perpetually for his heirs) by allowing himself a moderate and decent use of all that he hath gotten by his honest labours; cheerfully communicating them with his friends and neighbours; and, lastly (in order to these), by being truly and devoutly religious, acknowledging God to be the donor of all good things; from whose bountiful hand proceeds even this power, both to enjoy all a man hath with a quiet, peaceable, and well-pleased mind, in the midst of all troubles of this life; and, in conclusion, to leave all with the like mind unto those that shall come after him.

Ver. 25. *For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?*] For the truth of which, you may rely upon my experience; who, when I could have hoarded up as much as any other man, chose rather freely to enjoy the fruit of my labours; and was as forward to spend, as ever I was to get: but must acknowledge this to be the singular grace of God to me, who preserved me from that great folly of neglecting myself, for the sake of I know not whom.

Ver. 26. *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather, and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.*] For this is a blessing which God reserves for him whom he loves; whose sincere piety he rewards with wisdom to judge when, and with knowledge to understand how, he should enjoy, and take the comfort of, all that he hath; especially with inward joy, satisfaction of heart, and tranquillity of mind, in this favour of God to him; whereby the troublesome affairs of this life are tempered and seasoned: but he delivers up him that regards not God, to the most cruel tormentor, which are his insatiable desires, and anxious cares, with busy labours and incessant pains, to increase his estate without end, and to heap up vast treasures, which God disposes afterward to those who approve themselves to him, in a pious, just, and charitable life, with contented minds.

Now what a vanity and vexation is this also to a sinner, to get riches for those to whom he never designed them? Nay, it is a sad thought to a good man, that if his son be not virtuous, the estate he leaves is not likely to prosper with him. See Annot. [o]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. Thus Themistocles, Lucullus, and others (as Melancthon observes), being wearied in their attendance upon public affairs, by many unprofitable contentions, nay, by the ingratitude of the people, delivered up themselves unto pleasures, as better than ill-bestowed pains.

[b] Ver. 2. *Laughter.*] The censure he passes upon this makes it necessary to expound it of such dissolute and frantic mirth, as I have mentioned in the Paraphrase.

[c] Ver. 3. *Gave myself.*] The word in the Hebrew (as the margin of our translation informs the reader) imports something of *extension;* as in other places of Scripture: (Psal. xxvi. 10.) because, when men indulge themselves very liberally in eating and drinking, the blood boils and rises, the veins swell, and the skin of the whole body is distended.

Lay hold on.] The word signifies not simply to apprehend, but to keep under restraint what we have seized. As the Philistines are said to have *taken* David (had him in their power) in Gath; in the title of Psal. lvi. Thus I have expounded it here, as most agreeable to the sense of the place.

[d] Ver. 4. *Great works*] Include all that follow, to the end of ver. 8. consisting either in buildings, or in plantations, and water-works belonging to them; or in his household; or his stock upon his land; or his exchequer, and magazines; or in things that were for mere state and magnificence, *viz.* royal furniture; or in great variety of vocal and instrumental *music;* to which some add a kind of *seraglio* of the most beautiful women that could be found: though for this last there is no ground to think it here mentioned; but what lies in two hard words, of which I shall give an account presently.

[e] Ver. 5. *Gardens.*] The Hebrew word *gennoth* some will have it to be proper places for *flowers, herbs, sallads,* and all manner of *fruit-trees;* and *pardesin,* which we translate *orchards,* to be only *woods, forests,* or *parks.* Of which there is no certainty: for this last word *pardesin* is used but twice more in the Holy Scripture; and in the first of those places we translate it *forests,* (Nehem. ii. 8.) and in the other, (Cant. iv. 13.) it signifies a place where *pomegranates* grew. And therefore it indifferently signifying either of these, I have expressed both in the Paraphrase. And, if we judge of such places by what the Greeks (from this word) call a *paradise,* they were so large as to comprehend not only all sorts of trees, both fruit-trees and others (such as *cedars, cypresses,* &c.) but *fountains,* and *fish-ponds,* and *aviaries,* and *walks,* for all kinds of beasts, wild and tame: in short, whatsoever could make a place pleasant, either by nature or art.

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[*f*] Ver. 6. *Pools.*] The word *berecoth* carrying in it the notion of *blessing*, some interpreters will have it to signify places filled and supplied by the great *blessing* of rain. But there is no reason for this limitation, it being as capable to signify any lake, or large hollowness in the ground, or upon it, for the reception of water, either from the clouds, or from springs, or from rivers; which are beneficial for sundry uses, as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase.

[*g*] Ver. 7. Though the word *baker* properly belongs to *oxen* and *cows;* yet we well translate it, the *greater sort of cattle*, comprehending *camels*, *asses*, &c. In like manner, *tzon* is commonly used for *sheep*, but comprehends *goats* also; and therefore is well translated by us, the *lesser sort of cattle*. All which, both great and small, are comprehended under the general word *mikneh*, which we translate *possession*.

[*h*] Ver. 8. *Peculiar treasure.*] The word *segullah* signifies either the *things* themselves that are rare and precious; or the *place* where such things are reposited and kept, *viz.* a *treasury*.

But the greatest difficulty in this verse, and indeed in this chapter, is, to tell what is meant by *siddah* and *siddoth;* which he calls, in the conclusion of this description of his magnificence, *the delights*, or delicious pleasures, *of the sons of men*. These Bochartus hath probably conjectured to be most excellent compositions in *music*, or most excellent verses, set by a rare artist among the Phœnicians, called Sido, to the most ravishing and melting notes. And therefore I have not so much as taken notice of their interpretation, who, deriving these words from an original signifying spoil and devastation, understand hereby *beautiful women*, taken captive in the wars; of which the king had the first choice, as he had of the rest of spoil. For there were no wars in his time, till the latter end of his reign; and then he was rather worsted than victorious. Some, indeed, to keep this sense, derive it from *saddaim*, the breasts, or paps; because no small part of women's beauty (which they would have to be the *delights* here spoken of) consists in the fine shape and decent position of this part of their body. But this seems to be far fetched; and therefore I have let it, and divers other interpretations, alone; and only expressed the sense of our own translation, which takes these for *musical instruments;* and those of such extraordinary sweetness, that they left no part of a man's soul untouched, nor room for any other pleasure. (so some derive it, from a word signifying *abundance*); and had some regard to the LXX. who understand it of such as waited upon him at the table (*cup-bearers*, and such-like officers), where *music* also was seldom wanting, but made a part of the entertainment of great persons; as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase.

[*i*] Ver. 9. *My wisdom remained.*] For it was not the manner of great men, in ancient time, to pass their feasts only in eating and drinking, and, after the sottish custom now, to send the cups going round, when all was taken away; but to spend the time in pleasant, but learned, discourses, or in telling stories, or propounding and resolving questions; which might whet the wit, and form men's manners, or open the secrets of nature; and at the same time both refresh and instruct the mind. As we see at Samson's marriage-feast he propounded a riddle to be unfolded, concerning the generation of bees, out of the carcass of a lion. In Plutarch's Symposiacs, there are abundance of such merry and learned questions resolved. And Athenæus, in his Deipnosophists, hath excerpt the flower of all arts, and authors, poets, philosophers, and historians. In Virgil also at the end of his first book of Æneids, Jopas is introduced singing a philosophical song (at the feast which Dido made), concerning the motions of the moon and the sun, and in short of all that Atlas, that most famous astronomer, had taught. And in another place, Æneas himself relates the destruction of Troy.

[*k*] Ver. 10. *My portion.*] Though wisdom thus bridled his pleasures, yet it did not restrain him from such a free and plentiful enjoyment of them, that there was no sort which he did not taste as highly of as was possible, without making himself a mere fool. This he calls *his portion*, by a metaphor taken from inheritance; which being divided into parts, every one of the children had his part given him; or from *lots*, which as they were used among merchants, so sometimes in the dividing of inheritances; when the heirs could not agree among themselves about the equality of the *portions* which were set out for them.

[*l*] Ver. 11. *I looked.*] Having considered the value of this *portion*, he could not say it was much worth; but rather that there was very little in it: and therefore he prefers wisdom much before all this pleasure; and still far more before sottish and mad pleasure, (ver. 12.)

And yet, for all that, after he had taken the benefits of wisdom into a second consideration, (ver. 13, 14.) he could not but conclude again, that there is a *vanity* in that also. Which is threefold; as there are three ends for which men study wisdom. First, that they may provide for their safety and security: secondly, that they may commend their names to posterity: or, thirdly, that they may leave to their children what their singular prudence and great diligence have gathered together. But all these he shews are vain designs.

[*m*] Ver. 15. *Happened.*] For instance, he represents here how all mankind, wise and fools, are alike liable to the same casualties, and many inconveniences, which are common to every one of us in this life. Which the Lord Bacon (in book iv. of the Advancement of Learning, chap. 2.) extends to such considerations as this: that, "in all times, witches, and old women, and impostors, have been rivals and competitors, in the reputation and opinion of the multitude, with the ablest physicians; and contended with them for the same cures: nay, the impostor bears away the prize, and virtue lies under the censure; such is the weakness and credulity of men, they prefer a mountebank, or a witch, before a learned physician: which the poets observed when they made Æsculapius and Circe, brother and sister, both children of the sun. And what follows from hence, but that the physicians say to themselves, as Solomon in another case, *It befals to me, as it doth to the fool; why should I labour to be more wise?* It discourages them, that is, in their profession."

[*n*] Ver. 16. *No remembrance.*] And then, for the other two (mentioned above, *k*) he observes how short-lived our memorial is, as well as ourselves, (ver. 16, 17.) and that no man can be sure, who shall inherit his labours, or what kind of person he shall be; wise or sottish, good or bad, (ver. 18, 19.) Which he reflects upon again in the following verses with a very heavy heart, that made him weary of life, (ver. 20, 21.) And then concludes the chapter, with

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a brief account of the true way to enjoy all the happiness that this world can afford: of which we are utterly incapable, unless we have a sense of God, and be devoutly affected towards him as the author and donor of all good things. Which I have expressed so fully in the Paraphrase of ver. 24, &c. that I may be censured for making it too long; and therefore shall not commit another error, in enlarging it farther here.

[o] Ver. 26. But only observe, that *wisdom* and *knowledge* in this verse do not differ, as they may be thought to do, i. 26. but relate both of them to the same thing; only with such a distinction, as I have mentioned in the Paraphrase; or, as others will have it, *wisdom* relates to the acquisition of the good things of this world, *knowledge* to the use; from which prudent fruition flows the *joy* he mentions together with them. Thus Corranus.

The last words of the chapter are referred by all expositors, in a manner, only to the condition of the *sinner*, which immediately precedes: but since they have a true sense with respect to all men whatsoever, good and bad, I thought it best so to expound them; with regard to the whole foregoing verse.

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

Upon the mention of God's overruling providence, in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, Solomon proceeds from thence to illustrate (in the first part of this chapter) both those things, of which he had discoursed before; *viz.* first, the *imperfection* of human wisdom; which is confined to a certain time or season, for all things that it would effect: which if we neglect, or let slip, all our contrivance signifies nothing. And, secondly, that the utmost *perfection* at which our wisdom can arrive in this world, consists in these things: first, in being contented in this order wherein God hath placed all things, and not disquieting ourselves about that which it is not in our power to remedy, or alter; or, at least, not for the present: secondly, in observing and taking the fittest opportunity of doing every thing, as the most certain means to tranquillity: there being nothing that makes our mind more unquiet than striving against the stream (as we speak), and, when the wind is against us, labouring to bring about our ends, and to obtain our desires: and, thirdly, in taking the comfort of what we have at present; and making a seasonable and legitimate use of it: and, lastly, in bearing the vicissitudes that we find in all human things with an equal mind; because they are necessary and unalterable.

These were the things he had suggested in the conclusion of the former chapter; and the beginning of this may have relation to every one of them. And since he had spoken before also (ver. 9, 10, of the second chapter) concerning the moderating of pleasures by wisdom, and of the study of wisdom by seasonable pleasures, I do not know but he may have respect unto that also; and therefore I have begun with it in the Paraphrase.

Castalio goes still farther, and thinks the meaning of the first part of this chapter may be, that it is in vain to expect our happiness in this world; for this is no more the time and the place for it, than seed-time is the harvest. But we must stay till the next life for it; which is the proper time for complete happiness: here we must be content with a great many tears. Which is a pious meditation, but seems not to be the scope of Solomon; and therefore I have not touched upon it.

In short, he still continues to enlarge himself upon the two first things, wherein men place their happiness; *wisdom* and *pleasure:* and comes not to the third till the middle of this chapter, where I shall observe it.

Ver. 1. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*] How vain an attempt it is to obtain the forenamed tranquillity by fixing our mind upon any one thing in this world; and how necessary it is to let the study of wisdom, for instance, and the enjoyment of pleasure, labour, and rest, take their turns, God himself hath shewn us, by tying us to this order in the course of things: which, whether they be natural or depend upon our will, will have their certain appointed seasons and occasions; upon which all our designs, counsels, and endeavours have such a dependance, that if we will not observe them, we shall not only lose our labour, but miserably vex and torment ourselves to no purpose. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.*] As for natural things, we see in ourselves that there is a stated time for an infant's lying in the womb before it can be born; and the time afterward for its growth, and stay in the world; beyond which a man cannot go, but drops into his grave: and so it is not only with other living creatures as well as man, but with herbs, and roots, and plants, which we cannot set and sow at all times; but must take the proper season both for that, and for gathering the crop when it is come to maturity, or else our pains are ill bestowed, and we find to our sorrow that we have laboured in vain.

Ver. 3. *A time to kill, and a time to heal: a time to break down, and a time to build up.*] And thus it is in the diseases of our body; there is a time when they are so infectious that they are incurable, or when it is so improper to administer physic that it doth no good, but certainly kills; whereas, at another time, those very remedies prove effectual means to restore our health unto us: and so it is in other structures as well as our own bodies; there is a time when it is more proper to break down a building than it is to raise it; and when houses are built, there are seasons for repairs, and sometimes for pulling them down and erecting them anew, or else they will not stand. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 4. *A time to weep, and a time to laugh: a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*] Other alterations also there are in human life, which sometimes naturally move our tears; and at another time our laughter: nay, there are times not only for tears, but for the bitterest lamentations, which the funerals of our dearest relations, or the public calamities, require; and again, there is a time (at a wedding suppose) which provokes us so naturally, not only to be merry, but to leap and dance for joy; that it would be as absurd then to bewail ourselves, as it is to dance about the dead bodies of our friends.

Ver. 5. *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together: a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.*] And in the plantations which we make,

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there is a time when it is fit to pick up stones, and throw them out of our vineyards or fields of corn; and there is another time, when it will be as necessary to gather up the same stones again, to make a fence about those vineyards or fields, or to repair the highways; and as it is in these natural things, so it is in those that depend upon our own disposal: there are seasons proper for husband and wife to enjoy the ends of marriage; but there are other times when they ought to refrain, and deny themselves even these otherways innocent pleasures.

Ver. 6. *A time to get, and a time to lose: a time to keep, and a time to cast away.*] In like manner, in our traffic and commerce one with another, there is a time of gaining much; but there are other times, when a man must be content to lose by his commodities: sometimes also it is fit for him to lay up, and keep what he hath gotten; but at another time it will be as fit for him to spend or to give away to those that need it.

Ver. 7. *A time to rend, and a time to sew: a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*] In direful disasters, also, as when God is blasphemed, it becomes us to rend our garments; but after a certain time, it will be as becoming to sew up the rent again; and as, on other occasions, the proper times for holding one's peace, or for speaking, are to be observed; so in great grief, it is to no purpose to administer comfort, till the passion be a little over; and then discourse will be as seasonable as silence was before, (Job ii. 13. iv. 1, 2.)

Ver. 8. *A time to love, and a time to hate: a time of war, and a time of peace.*] To conclude, love itself may turn into hatred; so that they who are now well-affected towards us, may prove our enemies; or those in whose company we now delight, there may be reason hereafter to avoid: and the like turns there are in public, as well as in private affairs; there being just causes sometimes for making war; and then, such a change in the state of things, that it is greater wisdom to conclude a peace.

Ver. 9. *What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?*] And therefore, why do we fancy any thing to be settled, fixed, and constant, here in this world; unless it be these opposite changes? Or, to what purpose is all our labour and travail for any thing, out of the season proper for it? And what great matter is it that we then get; since we must expect another season to part with it? See Annot. [c]

Ver. 10. *I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*] For that which I have observed from all this is, that God hath made it our business to mark the times and seasons that are fit for the doing of all things, which hath great trouble and anxiety in it: and there is a farther trouble, that after we have done what we desired, we must submit to that time and season, which will undo all again.

Ver. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*] And though we are not wont to be satisfied with this vicissitude of things, yet God, no doubt, hath disposed them thus most wisely; and there is such a beautiful order appears in several contrarieties (as, for example, of heat and cold, of day and night), that we may well conclude there is so in all manner of events, though never so opposite; which God also hath given us wisdom to discern, in part; having endued man with the understanding of the present state of things, in the age wherein he lives: yet as that is imperfect (it being beyond our skill to know when our industry will succeed, and when a change will come), so he is not able to find out what respect the present changes have to the times that are gone before, and to those that are yet to come hereafter; and so cannot give an exact account of the government of God, because he sees not the beginning, and the progress, and the conclusion of every thing that comes to pass. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 12. *I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.*] Wherefore long consideration and experience assure me, that, leaving these fruitless inquiries and vexatious cares about the future, the only happiness that is in our power, is to make the best we can of our present condition: rejoicing that things are so well with us, and being solicitous for nothing in this world but to obtain a good hope in God, by living piously and virtuously, and doing good to others with what we have; and this not remissly and by fits, but seriously and constantly, as long as we live. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 13. *And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*] And if a man have arrived at so much happiness, as not to deny himself the use of what he hath at present, out of a vain fear of wanting in time to come, but can so freely and cheerfully enjoy the fruit of his honest labours, as to be well satisfied in the midst of all the inconveniences of this life, let him not ascribe it unto his own wisdom, but thankfully acknowledge the great goodness of God herein: for it is a singular gift of his, to be able, with a quiet and contented mind, to take the comfort of those blessings which God's bounty has bestowed on us, (ii. 24.)

Ver. 14. *I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*] And, on the other side, it is not only very foolish and vain, but a great plague, to be discontented that things go otherwise than we desire; for certain it is, God hath settled them by such an eternal and immutable law, in that course and order before described (ver. 1, &c. in which nothing is superfluous, nothing wanting), that it is not in the power of man to make the least alteration one way or other: therefore we must alter ourselves, and not murmur that we cannot change the course of things; which God hath thus immoveably fixed, not to make us miserable, by fretting at it, but happy, by reverent submission to the Divine government, and humble patience under those troubles which we cannot honestly avoid; and a due care not to offend the Divine Majesty, whose will shall be done one way or other, if not by us, yet upon us. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 15. *That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been: and God requireth that which is past.*] This alone is sufficient to silence all our unprofitable, as well as undutiful complaints, about that which hath always been, and ever will be. For we, in this present age, are subject to no other laws than those by which God hath governed the world from the beginning; nor will the next produce any other method than that wherein he hath already proceeded: but, though that which succeeds thrusts out what went before, it brings the very same things about

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again, as constantly as spring and fall, summer and winter, return in their seasons.

Ver. 16. *And, moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.*] But, beyond all this, it is lamentable to consider how that which God hath provided as a remedy for a great many evils which we bring one upon another in this world, is quite perverted, and turned to be itself the greatest evil of all other. The power and authority, I mean, which are committed unto men of great place, wisdom, and dignity: who lean so much to their own affections, that I myself have observed nothing but corruption in the highest, as well as the lowest, courts of judicature: for, whether men's lives or their estates were concerned, such unjust sentences were pronounced, (to the condemning the innocent, and acquitting the guilty, &c.) that I could not but conclude there is nothing more dangerous than for a man who hath not that fear of God before his eyes, (which I now mentioned, ver. 14.) to be advanced unto honour and entrusted with power. So vain are they that place their felicity in these. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 17. *I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose, and for every work.*] For, so rooted is this impiety in the hearts of men, and such arts there are to defeat the best endeavours to redress it, I could bring my thoughts about this matter to no other issue but this (in which we must all be satisfied), that there is a supreme Judge of all, who will in due time make that difference between men and things, which we cannot do now; absolving and rewarding the righteous, and condemning and punishing the wicked: for as there is a time, I observed before, for all other things, so there is for this; they that govern the world have their time now, for contriving and acting what mischief they please; but he will take a time hereafter of calling them to an account for the injustice they designed, as well as did, in the courts of judgment. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 18. *I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.*] But in the mean time I could not but think the condition of mankind, especially of the poorer sort of them, to be very deplorable; which made me fetch a deep sigh, and wish to God that he would be pleased to lay these great men open and manifest to themselves, and make them sensible, that they have no reason to look down with so much contempt upon others; much less treat them like beasts destined to the slaughter: for, were they stripped of their external pomp and power, they are so far from excelling other men, that in many regards they do not excel the very beasts. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 19. *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.*] For as the beasts are subject to many accidents which they think not of, so are all mankind, who can no more foresee several things that happen to them than the beasts themselves; or, if they herein differ from them, that they can better defend themselves from some things that befal them; yet there is one thing which makes them all equal, and that is death: for both men and beasts not only grow old, but die alike; and while they live, one sucks in no other air than the other doth; which, when they can no longer breathe, a man remains as much an unprofitable lump and putrid carcass as a beast: and, therefore, herein can pretend to no pre-eminence above other inferior creatures; but they are both equally vain and perishing.

Ver. 20. *All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*] And being dead, their bodies are dissolved into the same principles, out of which they sprang; so that herein they are both alike again: for man, as proud as he is, derives his body from no higher original than the dust; the very same dust of which the beasts are made; into which they both, men and beasts, must return again at the last.

Ver. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*] As for the spirit, which makes all the difference between the beasts and us, that is invisible; and where shall we find a man, especially among those great persons (spoken of before), who seriously considers it? and believes that the souls of all mankind go to God that gave them, (xii. 7.) to be judged by him (ver. 17. of this chapter); whereas the souls of beasts perish with them? No; herein they differ not at all from beasts, that having buried their minds in brutish pleasures, they have no more sense of a future life than they; but imagine that their souls die together with their bodies. So senselessly stupid are they that trample upon the rest of mankind, and yet have such ignoble thoughts of themselves, that they imagine their very souls are no longer lived than a beast. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 22. *Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?*] And therefore, considering that our bodies have no privilege above the beasts, and that mankind are so liable to be abused by those who should protect them, (ver. 16. 19, 20.) I was confirmed in my former opinion, (ii. 24.) that it is best for a man herein also to imitate the beasts, by enjoying freely the good things God hath blessed him withal, and taking all the comfort he can find in them at present, without solicitous care about the future: for this is all he can be sure of; it being in no man's power to secure him, he shall enjoy that hereafter, which he makes no use of now; much less when he is dead, can he be brought back again to take any pleasure in the fruit of all his labours, or see what becomes of them.

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. *Season.*] The Hebrew words *zeman* and *gneth* signify either that point of *time* when things, being ripe, come forth of themselves, by the constitution of their several beings, as all *natural* things do: or that occasion which serves our *voluntary* actions, and is fit for effecting what we design. The Hebrews observe, that Solomon here reckons seven opposite seasons, of each sort, as a complete demonstration, by induction, of the truth of this general proposition in the first verse: which holds good even in virtue itself: which is not proper, but in its place. For fortitude hath not always been successful (as the Lord Herbert observes), nor temperance safe, nor justice opportune: the fury and insolence of the outrageous people having, in some insurrections, grown to that excess, that it has been

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greater wisdom to pass by awhile than to punish them. And it is very apparent also in our councils, when they are conducted merely by human wisdom; which is not able, without a Divine direction, to choose the most fortunate (as we call them) and happy seasons for undertakings. Brutus, Cicero, Hirtius Pansa, all thought to restore the ancient estate of the Roman commonwealth (as Melancthon notes), but were deceived; and after the same manner many are still, still and will be deceived. Then businesses proceed, when we obey his Divine directions, and he assists: and yet then sometimes more, and sometimes less difficulty.

[*b*] Ver. 3. *Kill.*] In the third verse I have taken the liberty of following my own judgment in expounding the first part of it: which I have not referred to punishing and sparing offenders, as interpreters do; but to the condition of diseases that are in our bodies. For though the other be an excellent sense, yet this seems to be more agreeable to the wise man's meaning: because he is hitherto speaking of things natural; and the word *heal* also directs rather to that sense, which I have given of *killing*, than the common one. The same may be said of the next part of the verse; there being a craziness in buildings, as well as in the body of man: and some weather so improper to raise a fabric, that the parts will not hang together; but that which cements them moulders so fast away, that that time were better spent in pulling down a house, than in building it up.

As for the rest of the calendar or *ephemeris* (as the Lord Bacon calls it), which the wise man hath made of the diversities of times and occasions for all actions, I need give no farther account of it here, than I have done in the Paraphrase.

[*c*] Ver. 9. *What profit.*] Nor is it hard to expound the inference he makes in this verse, from the foregoing induction: which I have expressed as fully as I could in the Paraphrase; and more largely in the Argument of this chapter. Gregory Nazianzen thinks, he only intends to reflect upon the great inconstancy, as of all earthly things, so of human actions, (sometimes, for instance, men are madly in love with a woman, and in time they as much hate her; now they are eager to get, and at another time they profusely spend; sometimes they kill, and sometimes they are killed; sometimes do nothing but talk, and at another time have not a word to say, &c.) and therefore all his labours are vain. But I have extended it farther, with a respect to other things, which the forenamed induction suggests to us.

[*d*] Ver. 11. *World in their heart.*] There is greater difficulty in this verse, if we connect it with the rest of the discourse; as we ought to do. Which I have endeavoured to explain by taking the word *haolam, the world*, for the present state of things, in this age wherein we live (which is a genuine sense of it), whereof God hath given us some understanding; but not so perfect as to be able to give an account of the reason and scope of every thing that we see happen in this world, because we are ignorant of what went before, and of what will follow after, when we had or shall have no being here.

It is commonly understood of the works of nature. And in this sense the Lord Bacon (in the beginning of his book of the Advancement of Learning) hath admirably expounded it, in this manner: "In these words, *he hath placed the world in man's heart*, &c. Solomon declares not obscurely, that God hath framed the mind of man as a mirror, or looking-glass, capable of the image of the whole world; and as desirous to receive it, as the eye is to entertain the light: and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things, and the vicissitude of times; but ambitious to find out and discover the immoveable and settled laws and decrees of nature. And though he intimates, that this whole economy of nature (which he calls *the work that God hath wrought, from the beginning to the end)* cannot be found out by man; it doth not derogate from the capacity of his mind, but is to be imputed to the impediments of learning," &c.

There is one interpreter (Corranus) who by *olam, world*, understands the circular motion of things for the service of man. But I can find no such use of the word any where, else the sense would be elegant enough, which arises from thence; *viz.* that this *revolution* being remote from our knowledge, and a secret to us; who cannot tell what day or hour it will be; we ought not to trouble ourselves about this, but make use of the present, and refer the rest to God.

Melancthon also hath an unusual interpretation; which is, that God made things so, that we should sweetly enjoy them (that he understands by *placing the world in man's heart)*, but men make the use of them unpleasant, by their wandering desires, by their vain solicitude, by their diffidence; which make them long after new things, and meddle with that which is unnecessary. Like M. Antony, who, when he had gotten the most flourishing part of the empire, could not be content; but, out of an unquiet nature, desired the whole, and so lost all. This he makes the sense of the latter end of the verse; which he thus translates: *man cannot find out the work of God, neither the beginning nor the end of it.* Therefore, as I said just now, it is wisdom to satisfy ourselves with what we have; for the present only is that which is in our own power.

[*e*] Ver. 12, 13. And so it follows in these two verses: the sense of which Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. liii.) hath thus briefly expressed, *the greatest good of man I persuade myself to be* ἐκθυμίαν, καὶ εὐποΐαν, *cheerfulness of mind, and beneficence, or doing good to others;* and this short pleasure alone the Divine indulgence bestows upon us, if righteousness conduct all our affairs.

[*f*] Ver. 14, 15. And with this we must rest contented, for with all our toilsome thoughts, we cannot alter the course of things: which God, he here shews, hath immutably settled; on purpose that we should be sensible of a power above ourselves. Which it is our wisdom to stand in such awe of, as not to contend with it, but submit unto it: that so we may obtain all the favour from him, which in such a state of things, as his wisdom hath appointed, can be indulged to us. And here, I think, Melancthon hath very pertinently observed, that Solomon doth not merely recite the vain complaints and endeavours of mankind, after the manner of philosophers and poets; but lays down a rule of life, as the best remedy that can be found for our disease. Which is, *not to trust to ourselves, nor to indulge our own curiosity and appetites; but to be sensible of our own infirmities, to fear God, to obey his commands, to keep within the bounds of our vocations, and to beg and expect the help of God, and to acquiesce in his holy will and pleasure.*

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[g] Ver. 16. Unto these things it is better for us to apply ourselves, than it is to endeavour to be great and mighty; which is another vain desire of man, fancying he can thereby keep off many evils; for few can be at the top of all; and so there must be still greater than we, by whom we may be oppressed: and our vexation will be so much the greater, when with all our power we cannot hinder it. As for those that are in the very highest places, (if they have not that fear of God, before spoken of, ver. 14.) their power doth but betray them, to do the more mischief unto themselves and others; and thereby increase the misery of mankind. This seems to be the dependance between the foregoing verses and this. Wherein the wise man passes to the consideration of the third thing (mentioned upon chap. i. 12.) unto which some aspire, as the highest happiness; *viz. greatness, power,* and *honour*. Which if a man be bad, make him so much the worse himself, and the world by his means: and if he be good, will trouble him very much, to find there are many abuses, which by all his power he cannot remedy. For Solomon himself saw several gross impieties committed (as he tells us in this verse), even by them who were appointed to be the guardians of men's lives, liberties, and enjoyments; which he, as great a king as he was, wanted ability wholly to redress: but still they went on so confidently in their wicked course of perverting judgment, that he was fain to leave them to be judged by the supreme judge of all, God Almighty. And if it were so in the reign of a good and wise king, what could be hoped for in the reign of those who were impious and injudicious, as most of the kings of Israel and Judah were? for such pervert all things by their covetousness, ambition, or folly; so that their subjects can have no justice, nor enjoy any tranquillity. And besides, they permit (as he shews afterward, chap. v.) many corruptions to creep in the Divine worship; and ridiculous rather than religious ceremonies to be introduced, &c. whereupon follows a great decay of all moral virtue.

In short, this is a great part of the vanity and misery to which we are here subject; that, as Melancthon well notes, there are many things done unjustly, even under just governors; because they are not able to look unto all things themselves, but must manage them by other men: many of which are negligent, others wicked and swayed by depraved affections; and yet crafty enough to cover their own guilt. Here is the only comfort, that *God notwithstanding preserves government, and political order;* and in his time will judge even kings and judges of the earth.

[h] Ver. 17. The last words of this verse may, in my judgment, be thus most literally translated out of the Hebrew: *There is a time for* (judging) *every purpose, and every work there; viz.* in those corrupt courts of judgment: every thing that hath been transacted in the judicatures he had been speaking of.

[i] Ver. 18. These words, which follow the former, are variously interpreted; but they have a perspicuous sense, if they be taken in the coherence with the foregoing (as in reason they ought to be), without fancying, as some have done, that they are spoken in the person of an *epicure*. And so I have considered them; as intended to take down the vain opinion those great men have of themselves (which makes them tyrannize over their inferiors), by representing to them (or rather desiring God would effectually represent to their minds) how little they differ from beasts; save only in that which they do not at all value, or regard, *viz.* their immortal spirits.

The word *lebaram,* to *manifest them,* is commonly expounded of God's manifesting them unto others; but I have taken it for his shewing them to themselves; agreeable to the word that follows, *lireoth, that they might see,* &c. The whole may be thus translated: *That God would clear their minds, that they may see,* &c. For it comes from a root which signifies such an accurate separation of one thing from another, that the difference may be perspicuously discerned.

[k] Ver. 21. And thus it seems also most reasonable to expound this last verse, in connexion with all the rest; and to understand the first word of it, *who;* concerning those persons mentioned in the beginning of this discourse: *Who among those unrighteous judges,* &c.

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

Having considered the power which many times falls into the hands of unjust and cruel men, he now represents the miserable estate of those that are subject to them: as a farther argument of the vanity and vexation unto which mankind are liable in this troublesome world. And having noted some of the principal mischiefs of this sort (of which I shall give a distinct account in the Paraphrase and Annotations upon it), he concludes the chapter with some animadversions upon the condition of the greatest, nay, and the best, of princes: who are not so happy as the world is apt to think them.

Ver. 1. *So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.*] But I have not yet done with the consideration of the miseries which mankind suffer by the abuse of that power which is necessarily placed in the hands of some persons for the good of others, (iii. 16.) For, reflecting again upon it, I observed the innumerable ways that were practised in this world for the undoing of others; both by violence and exactions, and by fraud and calumnies (as well as by unjust decrees), whereby so many were crushed, that nothing was to be seen or heard but the tears and cries, the sighs and groans, of such as lay in a desolate condition, and could find no relief; no, not so much as one to comfort them: for such was the greatness of their oppressors, who had gotten all power into their hands; that as they could not defend themselves against them, so nobody else durst express their compassion towards them, much less plead for them; for fear of being served in the same kind themselves. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. *Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.*] Which made me think it was better to be among the dead, who have made a happy escape from all these calamities, than to remain still alive; either to suffer under this tyranny, or to live in perpetual fear of it; or to behold such great grief of heart (but without power to help them) which many miserable wretches endure.

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Ver. 3. *Yea, better is he than both they who hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.*] Or rather (for why should I compare the living with those, who, though they now lie at rest in their graves, have been heretofore very sorely afflicted?) much more desirable than either of these, is it not to have come into the world at all: and so to have had no sense of the miseries which the dead have formerly felt, and the living now undergo.

Ver. 4. *Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.*] For besides what they suffer from mighty oppressors, they give one another a great deal of trouble; pride, ambition, emulation, envy, and hatred, reigning so uncontrollably every where among all orders and ranks, all trades and professions, that when a man hath taken a great deal of honest pains, in some useful work, and brought it to perfection; instead of gaining credit by it, and being honoured for it, his neighbours look awry upon him: nay, he is maligned, disparaged, and traduced, by those, who either cannot, or will not, imitate (but only carp at) his ingenious labours. So vain it is to endeavour to excel others in art or industry; which procure a man ill will, when he looks for thanks and commendations: and such an affliction it is to a man's spirit, to labour hard for an ungrateful world; who are tormented by that which should please them; and cannot see any worth in another, but they are vexed within themselves. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 5. *The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.*] But see now (as a farther instance of the vanity of mankind) what use some make of this; who are so absurdly foolish, as to be utterly discouraged, and to sit down in perfect idleness; because there are such oppressions, on one hand, from those above them, (ver. 1.) and such emulations, on the other hand, from those that are equal with them, and under them, (ver. 4.) A wise resolution this! to do nothing, because others do ill; not to satisfy one's self, because others will be displeased; not to satisfy, did I say? nay, he is hunger-bitten, and eaten up with cares how to live; he hath not a rag to his back to cover his nakedness; having reduced himself and family, by his laziness, to extreme penury. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 6. *Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.*] And though he want not excuses for his folly, yet they are as idle as his sloth: for he senselessly applies that common saying to his purpose, *One handful with ease is better than two without it:* Which is very true, if rightly understood; and may serve to reprove both him, and those from whom he learns this folly: for as idleness and emptiness always go together (and therefore he in vain expects to have so much as *one handful* without labour), so is a moderate estate gotten honestly, with moderate diligence, and enjoyed handsomely, with perfect contentment, better than the greatest treasures gotten by oppression, or with infinite toil, and enjoyed with anxious thoughts and fretting cares, and exposing a man either to the hatred or the envy of others. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 7. *Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.*] Nor is this all the folly into which men fall by the forenamed tyranny and oppression; (ver. 1.) but reflecting again upon this subject, I observed another extreme into which they run; no less void of reason and of satisfaction than the former.

Ver. 8. *There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.*] For, as some grow idle, so others grow too scraping and penurious; it being no rare thing to find a man that lives single and alone, without so much as a companion, and hath neither child, nor brother, nor kinsman, to make his heir; and yet he sets no measures, either to his labours, or to his desires, but toils and craves without end: and, which is still worse, as he can scarce find in his heart to allow himself the necessaries, much less the pleasures, of this life, so it never comes into his mind to think who shall be the better for all this when he dies; and what a madness it is, both to rack his mind with cares, and to pinch his belly, and deny himself the comfort of what he hath, for the sake of he knows not whom.

This also, certainly, is not only a senseless and unprofitable folly, but one of the greatest plagues and torments of human life. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 9. *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.*] How much wiser is he, who not only enjoys what he hath himself, but takes others into the society, to partake of the good things that God hath given him? for nothing is more comfortable than good company; as nothing is more dull and melancholy, than a solitary life: and besides, when two or more are adjoined together in common counsel, and mutual help and assistance, they will not only act more cheerfully, but more easily effect their design, and take the greater pleasure in the fruits of their labour. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 10. *For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.*] Or if they have any ill success, or fall into danger, it will not only make the singular benefit of fellowship the more plainly appear; because they will relieve and rescue one the other; but lamentable is his condition, who hath no friend, no companion, to reach out his charitable hand to him, when he falls (suppose into a pit); none to comfort him when he is sick; none to testify his innocence when he is defamed; or, which is worse, to restore him when, by his own imprudence or negligence, he falls into a sin.

Ver. 11. *Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?*] And therefore, in the very beginning of the world, God did not think fit to let man be alone, but gave him a helpmeet for him: and as two that lie together in the same bed cherish one another by their mutual heat; but it is hard to be warm alone; so do they that are strong, undaunted, vigorous, and cheerful, infuse that courage and comfort, which silver and gold cannot give, into those that are of a weak, timorous, dejected, or melancholy spirit.

Ver. 12. *And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*] To conclude, we are never more sensible of the benefit of society, than when we are assaulted by a powerful enemy; whom we cannot resist alone, but by the help of a friend

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may be able to overcome: for as a great many threads twisted together are not quickly broken, though a single one be soon snapped asunder; so he that is surrounded by his children, friends, and neighbours, will make a better defence, and hold out longer against those that invade his right, than that wretched man can do, (ver. 8.) who, by loving money alone, hath deprived himself of all such succours.

Ver. 13. *Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.*] But it is not society alone will make a man happy, without wisdom and virtue. For who are better attended and guarded than kings? and yet the poorest man that is, if he be wise and good, is far happier than the wealthiest prince on earth, who foolishly abuseth his power: nay, the towardly child of a poor man is much better than such a king, though his greatness be made more venerable by his gray hairs: for, besides that wisdom makes the poor youth contented with his condition, though never so mean (a blessing at which princes hardly arrive), it renders wholesome admonition also acceptable to him, when, by his inexperience, he falls into an error; but folly makes the other impatient of all advice and counsel, and the older he is, the more obstinate; because, as his kingly dignity, he fancies, authorizes him to do what he lists, so his age gives him a privilege of knowing, better than any body can tell him, what to do. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 14. *For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.*] By which means it comes to pass, that he who was born a mere beggar, nay, was as poor and abject as the vilest slave, rises, by his singular prudence, counsel, and conduct, unto a throne: when he whose ancestors were kings, and possessed his dominions by an hereditary right, is deserted by his subjects, and, through his folly and wickedness, falls into such contempt, that he not only loses his crown, but is reduced to the greatest poverty, in which he spends a miserable life.

Ver. 15. *I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.*] Or, if this happen not, yet (such is the infelicity of good princes) I have seen a great king left with nothing but the bare title, and the outward state of royalty; the hearts and affections of all nobles, gentry, and common people, from one end of the kingdom to the other, inclining to his son (or to the next heir) that is to succeed him; unto whom they do obeisance, as if he were already upon the throne, but neglect his old father; who sees himself robbed of those honours in which he placed his happiness; and that by his own son, who would have been more dutiful, perhaps, if he had been a private man. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 16. *There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*] Nor is this a thing that will have an end, but a humour so rooted in all mankind; that as, in all preceding time (before this king and son were born), they have been weary of that which they have long enjoyed; so this young prince, who is now followed with such applause, must not think that it will last always: but they that come after will take as little delight in him, as the present generation doth in his father; and, when he grows old, court his son, after the same fashion, as they now do him, being young.

From all which it appears, that happiness is not to be found in honour and dignity; no, not in the very highest pitch of it, which is the kingly power: for there also is not only dissatisfaction, but many dangers, troubles, and vexatious cares, which very much disturb and perplex their spirits. See Annot. [*i*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. *Oppressions.*] There are more evils than one that arise from the ill administration of public affairs. For they are either *external* or *internal*. And the *external* are two; either from *superiors*, or from *equals* and *inferiors*. Those from *superiors* he speaks of in this verse, and calls by the general name of *oppressions*, which comes from a root in the Hebrew, that signifies indifferently to oppress (or rather to *squeeze* others, and utterly *crush* them), whether it be by forcible violence, or by extortion in the traffic, or by fraud, circumvention, and false accusation. If it refer to any one of these more than to another, it is to the last. And therefore the LXX. though they translate it by several words, importing bearing down others by main strength, yet by none so frequent as by συκοφαντεῖν, to undo others by *calumny*.

[*b*] Ver. 4. *Envied.*] Those evils which come from *equals* or *inferiors*, he speaks of in this verse, and calls by the general name of *envy;* which is a word in the Hebrew that signifies, when it is taken in an ill sense, all those vicious affections, which are the causes, or the effects, of envious emulation, at the good qualities or prosperity of another person. Which St. James calls πικρὸς ζῆλος, *bitter zeal or envying*, (iii. 14.) and St. Paul is wont to express by two words, ἔρις and ζῆλος, strife (or making hate) and envying; Rom. xiii. 13. *strife and envying, i. e.* contentious or factious emulation; Philip. i. 15. *envy* and *strife, i. e.* invidious contention.

[*c*] Ver. 5. *Foldeth his hands.*] Here he passes to those evils which I called *internal;* which come not from others, but from ourselves. For some (seeing the forenamed *oppressions*, or the *envy* that attends upon men's industry and good successes) grow idle and leave off all business, (expressed here by *folding the hands*, see Prov. vi. 10.) because it is to no purpose to get what another may presently take away; or if he keep, it raises him other enemies, who grudge to see him so happy.

By this means such a man brings himself to extreme poverty: so that phrase, *eateth his own flesh*, signifies, one that is ready to die with hunger; and whose wife and children (called in Scripture a man's *flesh*) are in danger to starve with him. There are other explications of this phrase, upon which I have touched in the Paraphrase, which admirably express the folly of him that undoes himself, to avoid being undone by others.

[*d*] Ver. 6. *Better is a handful.*] Which, though it be a very absurd resolution, yet he wants not apologies for it. Nay, as if he were the only wise man (*sapientum octavus*, wiser than seven men that can render a reason, as Bishop Sanderson speaks), he utters sentences (but it is *like a parable in the mouth of a fool*, a speech full of reason in itself, but witlessly applied), and says, that *better is a handful*

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with quietness, &c. Wherein he makes a show of being the most contented soul that lives: but is far from it; desiring and coveting as much as the most toiling and moiling wretch in the world, if he might but have it, and never sweat for it.

Thus some understand this sixth verse: which others take to be Solomon's advice to the envious spoken of before, or to the covetous spoken of afterward, that they would be contented with their condition: moderate riches having fewer cares, which a great estate brings along with it in abundance. Unto all which I have had respect in the Paraphrase upon this verse.

[*e*] Ver. 8. *One alone.*] And as this is the fault on one side, so, on the other, there are those who turn their thoughts altogether to save what they can; pinching themselves by a penurious way of living, that they may seem poor and not worth the squeezing; and likewise have a secret reserve of unknown treasures in case they be oppressed. This he describes here, by the example of a man, who hath neither wife, nor child, nor friend, nor companion, but lives solitary in a house by himself, where he spends little, and yet thinks of nothing but getting riches; which he enjoys not at all, only looks upon them, and wishes still to see more.

One, not a second] Is properly a man without an heir, or a successor; as ver. 15.

[*f*] Ver. 9, &c. Upon the occasion of the foregoing observation, ver. 8. (the better to represent the folly of that sottish humour he there describes), he sets forth the benefit of society, which Greg. Thaumaturgus here calls Κοινωνίαν Βίου, *living in fellowship and communion together.* This he shews is profitable; first, to procure us greater happiness, which is the subject of this ninth verse; secondly, to preserve us in the enjoyment of that happiness when we have attained it: as he shews by three instances. First, to deliver us out of dangers; (ver. 10.) secondly, to fortify us against them; (ver. 11.) thirdly, to repel them when they actually assault us, (ver. 12.) Where is a proverbial saying of a *triple cord*, or *thread;* like to which there are many in other authors; but I forbear to fill this paper with them, and leave those also who have a mind to allegorical applications of these three things, to seek for them in other books. For my business is only to give a brief account of the literal sense, which is this in short: that a companion will afford us his help and assistance many ways; and, if there were no other benefit to be reaped from him, this would be an exceeding great comfort; to have one in our adversity, into whose bosom we may exonerate our sorrows, which will be the lighter, if we see there is any body that sympathizes with us in our calamities.

[*g*] Ver. 13, 14. And thus having represented the miserable effects of power abused to oppression: which bereaves men of the sweetest consorts of life; making them avoid society: he returns to consider the wretched estate of such oppressors, though never so mighty. Both from their own folly, ver. 13, 14. (where that expression is very remarkable, he *is made* or *becomes* poor in his kingdom, as Dr. Hammond well expounds it upon Matt. i. not. *a*) and from the fickleness and inconstancy of the people's affections; which create a great many troubles even to good governors, (ver. 15, 16.) Where there are many difficulties in the Hebrew texts; but not such as make the sense obscure: and an account is given of them by many authors; and therefore I shall only note what the Lord Bacon hath observed, for the illustration of the fifteenth verse, and what De Dieu hath noted upon the sixteenth.

[*h*] Ver. 15. This verse sets out the vanity of the people; who are wont to press and flock about the designed successors of princes. "The root of which vanity (saith the Lord Bacon, Advanc. of Learn. lib. vii. chap. 2. parab. 20.) is that frenzy in the minds of men, which inclines them, with too extreme an affection, unto their own projected hopes. *For the man is rarely found, that is not more delighted with the contemplation of his future hopes, than with the fruition of what he possesseth.* Another thing is, that *novelty which is pleasing to man's nature, and earnestly coveted:* now in the successor to a prince (called here his *second*), he that is next to him, these two concur; *hope* and *novelty.* Which make *more men* (as Pompey said to Scylla, and Tiberius afterward touching Macro) *adore the rising, than the setting sun.* And though princes, perhaps, who are in present possession, be not much moved with this fond humour, nor make any great matter of it (as neither Scylla nor Tiberius did), nay, they smile, it is possible, at the levity of men; and do not stand to fight with dreams (for hope is but the dream of a man awake), yet it cannot but inwardly vex them, to see themselves slighted, even by those on whom they have bestowed many benefits, merely in hope of receiving more from their next supposed successor. For they cannot reasonably expect more, perhaps, from him that now reigns; and therefore they make timely applications to the next heir. He hath done enough for them; and therefore they betake themselves to him who hath yet done nothing. And besides, old men grow tenacious, morose, and sour; whereas youth is commonly liberal, jocund, without care, and ambitious to do great things; especially at his entrance upon the kingdom." This, saith another learned writer, makes the long life of princes, and their power, troublesome and grievous, both to courtiers and people: of which they that live at Rome do not want ocular demonstration.

There is nothing more needful for the explication of this verse, but only to observe, that the *child*, or *youth*, who is here called *the second*, doth not suppose another child, or youth, that is *first:* but only signify, that this youth is *second in the kingdom.* Not second in respect to another son, but second in respect to his father, who reigns before him; and when he dies the son succeeds him.

[*i*] Ver. 16. The first words of this last verse, L. de Dieu seems to me to have expressed better than any other interpreter: they running thus word for word in the Hebrew: *There is no end to any people.* That is, no end to their fickleness, no bounds to their inconstancy; but one nation is as subject to it as another. And as this age follows the former, so the next will follow this, in its levity and mutability. And therefore those young princes, who are transported with the acclamations of the people, do but feed upon wind (as some, I observed upon the first chapter, translate those words, which we render *vexation of spirit*): for their applauses are like to their affections, as changeable as the wind; which will turn another way, to some other person, when this present prince grows old, or he rules ill, or the people's fancy and humour alter. And then it will be, indeed, a sore affliction to him, to see him-

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self despised, by those who formerly cried him up as if he had been their darling.

It may be referred also to the very government itself, with which the Israelites were not pleased. For when they were under judges they desired a king: and then they were not pleased with the *monarchy*, but wished for the old *aristocracy* again: though that in truth was the most excellent *monarchy*, which they would not understand, under the immediate government of God himself.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

Under an ill government in the state, religion itself is commonly corrupted in the church. And therefore, having set forth the miseries people endure under the oppressions of an abused power, and the extremes of folly into which it drives them; he begins this chapter with a correction of those errors that are in religion. Which is the only remedy, indeed, the only comfort we have against all the troubles to which we are subject in this world: but such is the vanity of mankind, they spoil their very remedy, and take away all the virtue of that which should be their support; turning it into mere ceremony, whilst their minds remain impure, and without any true sense of God. For they do not consider that he, who is a pure mind himself, must be better pleased with pure thoughts and affections, composed to the observance of his will, and acquiescence in his pleasure; than with all the sacrifices and offerings in the world, which the wicked may bring him as well as the good.

To prevent therefore this new folly into which men are apt to run, when they intend to cure all the rest, Solomon shews all those who would attain true tranquillity of mind, what they must do, and what they must avoid, in the worship of God. And about the middle of the chapter, as I shall observe in the Annotations, proceeds to consider the last of those four things wherein men place their happiness.

Ver. 1. *KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.*] And now, lest any man add to the affliction and torment of his spirit, even by that which is the only cure for it, let every one, who would be a true worshipper of God, in whom alone lies the happiness we seek, take care to avoid that negligence which is observable in many people; and to approach with all reverence, both of body and soul, into his blessed presence; but do not think to please him with mere postures of devotion; no, nor with sacrifice and incense, without the oblation of an obedient heart, disposed to do what he would have thee: for the worst men in the world may be able to offer him the richest sacrifices, but are very impious, as well as foolish, if they think he delights in the fat and the blood of beasts (save only as testimonies of love to him, and acts of obedience unto his will); for in that very thought they offend him, and make no conscience of what evil they do, while they believe their sacrifices atone for all. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.*] And next to this, when thou makest thy prayers to God, or givest him thanks for his benefits, deliberate with thyself beforehand what it is fit for thee to ask of him, or to vow unto him: and let not any sudden passion make thee inconsiderately, either with thy mouth or in thy mind, desire what is not fit for thee to have; or promise what is not fit for him to receive, or thou art not able or willing to give. But remember, first, how infinitely great the Lord and Governor of the world is, who comprehends all things; and then, how little and vile thou art, who prostratest thyself before him: and therefore do not dare to speak to him as an equal, whatsoever comes into thy mind, much less to make him large promises which thou canst not perform; but let a sense of his majesty, and of thy meanness, overcome thee into a profound reverence of him; expressing itself rather in ardent sighs and groans than in abundance of words; which signify nothing but want of a serious apprehension of him. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.*] It is so difficult, at the same time, to speak much and wisely unto God, that a man, whose thoughts have been distracted with a great deal of troublesome business in the day, is not more likely to be disturbed with confused dreams in the night, than he who pours out abundance of words in his prayers, is in danger to vent a great many vain, unseemly, absurd (if not impious) things, which are utterly unworthy of the Divine Majesty. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*] Yet this is not his greatest danger; for such men having in a fit of zeal bound themselves to God in magnificent promises, are very loath to perform them when they are cool again. And therefore let me farther advise thee, when, in great straits and difficulties, or after great blessings received from him, thou art apt, out of abundance of devout affection, to vow what thou wilt do for him; to deliberate and consider, as I said, in the first place, what thou art truly willing and able to give him; and then, having once vowed it to him, be no less forward to perform than thou wast to promise: for he is highly offended with those that childishly trifle with him, or impiously mock him with delusive promises, and do not keep their word with him: and therefore let me again advise thee to be very faithful and cheerful too in discharging such obligations speedily. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*] For though the innumerable benefits he bestows on thee may require some such grateful return from thee, yet it is a less fault not to vow at all, than, having vowed, not to perform: the one being but a neglect, the other an affront, nay, a contempt, of his majesty; who needs nothing, indeed, that thou canst give him, but will not suffer a scorn to be put upon him. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 6. *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*] Therefore do not hastily engage thyself in such vows as the weakness of human nature, and thy fleshly reluctances, will not suffer thee to perform;

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much less think of being absolved from the obligations thou layest on thyself, in the presence of God, and of his holy angels, by such foolish excuses as these; It was a mistake; I did not mind what I said; or, that was not my meaning: for this will but more increase thy guilt: and why shouldest thou farther incense the anger of the Almighty (who is too much provoked already, by thy breach of faith with him), not only to defeat those designs, for the success of which, perhaps, it was that thou madest thy vows; but blast all thy undertakings, and bring thy whole estate to ruin? See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 7. *For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.*] For all this folly, inconstancy, and falsehood of mankind, proceeds from the want of a serious awful sense of God, in whose worship and service they therefore devise, after the manner of men in dreams, a multitude of senseless things; hampering themselves, for instance, in many vows, from which they seek afterward in vain to extricate themselves, and therefore plainly violate and break: the cure of which lies in a holy fear of offending God; with which possess thy soul, especially when thou comest into his house, that it may preserve thee from speaking much unto him, and from vowing any thing, which is either unworthy of him, or so inconvenient to thyself, that afterward thou shalt not find in thine heart to make it good. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 8. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.*] And this also will preserve thee (if thou always preservest it in mind) from being too much troubled at that abuse of power, which began this discourse, (iii. 16.) when thou seest, for instance, those who should vindicate and protect the poor become the instruments of their oppression; so that even in the courts of justice, to which they fly for relief, their rights and their lives, perhaps, are violently wrested from them: be not dejected at this bold licence which they take; but remember that these great men have one higher than themselves, *viz.* the king; whom God hath set over them, as well as over others, to inspect their doings and to judge them; and if he neglect his duty too, there are higher than them all; *viz.* God, and his holy angels; whom he will employ to punish both them and him. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 9. *Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.*] And now let us consider, how senseless the love of money is, which is the cause of all this rapine and violent dealing. And this appears from the fruitfulness of the earth; which brings forth more than enough for all men's necessities, if husbandry be not neglected: an employment no less noble than innocent; for kings themselves, in former times, have not disdained to give their mind unto it; nor is there any prince now, who is not so much indebted to it, that it ought to be one of his principal cares, to encourage, secure, and protect it.

And yet, such is the vanity of mankind, that, disregarding these riches, which lie not very deep in the earth, all their business is, with incessant pains and danger, to dig into its bowels for gold and silver; which tempt them also to oppress and squeeze the poor, to pervert judgment, and do all manner of evil, to extort their money from them. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 10. *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.*] And what can it do for him that sets his heart upon it, but only to increase his desires, that they can never be satisfied? For though necessary things have certain bounds set them by nature, beyond which we do not desire them; yet money, and riches, and all unnecessary things, are unlimited; and, therefore, excite an endless appetite after them; which very appetite also deprives him, who indulges it, of the fruit of all his abundance; for imagining he parts with so much of his happiness, as he doth of his money, he hath not the heart to make use of it for his pleasure; nor scarce for his necessity. This is another strange folly, or rather madness, which infests mankind; and miserably torments them. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 11. *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding them with their eyes?*] But let us suppose that he useth his riches; yet it is but a small portion of them that he can enjoy; and as his estate increases, the greater family and retinue (if he will live like himself) he must maintain; who have a larger share than himself in the daily provision that is made by his expenses. And as for the rest, that is not expended (which he calls peculiarly *his*), he hath no other benefit from it, but only that it feeds and entertains his eyes: from which he derives all the true pleasure he hath above them, if he keep a good house willingly, that he sees many continually supported by his hospitality; but this very thing, if he be covetous, is his torment, that he beholds so many mouths, which eat at his cost and charges. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 12. *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.*] And as he that tills his ground, or serves him in any other labour, hath commonly a better appetite, and stronger digestion, and therefore more health, than himself; so he sleeps soundly, and is recruited with new vigour against the morning, whether his supper be small or large: when his rich master, if he eat sparingly, hath his head so full of cares and fears, or if he cram himself, hath it so filled with unquiet vapours, that he cannot sleep a wink; or tosses up and down so restlessly, that he is not at all refreshed by it, but, by his crudities, prepares matter for many diseases. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 13. *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.*] And, besides all this, there is another thing which is very calamitous, and may rather be called a grievous plague than a mere affliction; that these very treasures which men have heaped up, and preserved with a great deal of care, from thence expecting their felicity, prove, in the issue, their utter undoing: for I myself have seen some of these miserable men murdered by their servants, or by thieves, nay, by their own children, that they might be masters of these riches; which bring them also, perhaps, at the last, into the same or the like destruction. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 14. *But those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.*] Or, if this happen not, these riches perish (to their no small grief and trouble) by fire; or shipwreck; or bad bargains; or ill debtors; or those very crafty practices whereby he seeks to increase his estate; or by some other misfortune or mis-

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adventure; so that the son, whom he thought to have left possessed of abundance of wealth, hath nothing at all to support a wretched life. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 15. *As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.*] These things, indeed, do not always happen, but this which follows doth: that, though he die possessed of all that he hath gotten, yet he cannot carry one farthing away with him: but in this, he and the poorest wretch are both alike, that, as he came naked into this world, so he must be stripped again when he goes out of it; and, though his labour hath been great, and his estate no less, yet it is not in his power to take along with him so much as a winding-sheet; but what others please to bestow upon him.

Ver. 16. *And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?*] This is another grievous affliction, and sore torment, to mankind, especially to the wealthy, that the things, on which they have set their hearts, cannot accompany them into the other world; for as the richest man that ever was brought nothing hither, so he can carry nothing thither; but must leave all that he hath behind him: and then what advantage hath he? what pleasure? wherein doth he differ from a mere beggar? But in this only, that he hath taken a world of pains to no purpose; for that which gives no satisfaction, and which he can hold no more than he can the wind.

Ver. 17. *All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.*] And as at death he can find no comfort in all his wealth, so he took as little, perhaps, in his life; but dwelt obscurely, and, denying himself even what he had, led such a sad, melancholy, and sordid life, that his meat, and his drink, and the very light itself, gave him no pleasure: for such a man never thinks himself happy, but when some hope of gain shines upon him; and therefore, at other times, he pines, and grieves, and frets, and vexes himself, at every thing that makes an expense, or crosses his covetous desires and designs; insomuch that the sickness of the soul appears in his pale and careful looks, and in his lean and meagre body; which consumes and wastes, even by the sorrow and sadness, the vexation and displeasure, of his mind. See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 18. *Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the fruit of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion.*] Behold, therefore, the truth of that observation, which I have made more than once, (ii. 24. iii. 12, 13. 22.) and now repeat again; that it is best for a man, and most becoming, freely to use and enjoy the riches he hath gotten by his honest labours; both for the constant supply of all the necessities of nature, and for moderate delight and pleasure, for the entertainment of his friends, and the relief of his poor neighbours; and this not for a fit, but all the time that God is pleased to continue him in this world: for this is all that falls to his share; or that can truly be called his part, in the good things of this life; and the only way to prolong his days, and enlarge his portion in them. See Annot. [*p*]

Ver. 19. *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.*] And whosoever he be, whom God hath blessed, not only with plenty and abundance of worldly goods, but also with such a noble and generous mind, that he is not their slave, but truly master of them; being able to enjoy them innocently, and to take his full share in them, and that with cheerfulness, and delight in doing good to others: let him be very thankful to almighty God for so great a happiness; and acknowledge it to be a singular gift of his bounty, wherewith he rewards his honest labours.

Ver. 20. *For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.*] For he that is thus highly favoured of God, will not think life tedious or irksome; but (forgetting all his past toils, and taking no care for the future) spend his time most pleasantly: because God hath given him his very heart's desire, and he hath attained the scope of all his labours; in that inward tranquillity of mind, or rather joy and gladness of heart, wherewith God hath compensated all his pains, and testified his extraordinary kindness to him.

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. To prevent or cure that folly mentioned in the Argument of the chapter, he advises three things about the worship of God. The first of them is in this verse; to look to the disposition of their mind, when they go to God's house. And this pious disposition of mind consists also in three things: first, in frequenting the house of God, the place where he is worshipped: secondly, in a reverent behaviour there; suitable to the great thoughts we have of God, and to the humble sense we have of our own meanness: expressed by *keeping or observing the feet*; *i. e.* taking care to put off their shoes, or sandals, as the manner was in those countries; and to go barefoot into the holy places; answerable to which now is *uncovering the head* in our churches, &c. as Mr. Mede well discourses in more places than one: (book ii. p. 441. 546.) and then, lastly, in readiness of the will to obey all the Divine precepts as the best of sacrifices. For this is the sacrifice of wise and good men; and all other sacrifices without this are but the sacrifices of fools and wicked people: who are able, many times, to furnish the altar with more burnt-offerings than the best of men. But they are such fools as not to consider, that this very thing increases their guilt; that they imagine God will be pleased with the sacrifice of beasts, without the sacrifice of themselves; in entire obedience to his will. So our translation seems to understand the last clause of this verse: which may be thus also translated, *For they make no conscience to do evil.* It is no part of their religion to abstain from wickedness: but fancying by their sacrifices they shall atone for that, they do not fear to commit it. To this purpose Maldonate expounds it more plainly than any that I have read.

[*b*] Ver. 2. Here he gives the second advice; which is about prayer, and about vows to God, or (as St. Jerome seems to take it, and to which Melancthon wholly confines it) about the doctrines we deliver concerning God: which should be very well considered, before we affirm any thing of him. The two first are most proper to the place, especially the latter of them: both which I have comprehended in the Paraphrase of this verse.

[*c*] Ver. 3. The reason for the foregoing precept (*of*

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not using many words), taken from the consideration of God's greatness and our meanness, (ver. 2.) together with the enforcement of it in this verse, is thus explained by St. Jerome: He requires us, that, whether we speak or think of God, we should not venture beyond our ability; but remember our imbecility; and that, as far as the heaven is distant from the earth, so much do our thoughts fall short of the excellence of his nature. And therefore our words ought to be very moderate: for as a man that is full of thoughts commonly dreams of those things whereof his head is full, so he that attempts to discourse much of the Divinity falls into folly. Or rather thus: Our words ought therefore to be few, because even those things which we think we know, we see through a glass, and *in ænigmate;* and we do but dream of that, which we fancy we comprehend. So that when we have said a great deal (and to the purpose, as it seems to us), the conclusion of our disputation is folly.

And so much, we may be certain, he suggests unto us, that in a multitude of words spoken unto God (as I rather understand it), there must needs be many of them as idle as men's thoughts are in a dream. For the third verse sounds thus in the Hebrew: *For a dream proceeds from (*or *by) a multitude of toilsome business; and the voice of a fool from (*or *by) the multitude of words.* That is, if a man have a multitude of cares in his mind all the day, they will produce strange, extravagant, or distracted dreams in the night: and, in like manner, if a man utter abundance of words, without consideration and due weighing what he saith to God, many of them must needs be foolish; whether they be vows, or whether they be prayers unto him (or whether they be discourses concerning him; for we may refer it, if we please, to all). And the sense will not much differ, if that preposition which we translate *from*, be translated *with;* in this manner: *As dreams come with a multitude of business* (*i. e.* bring before the mind, in a confused manner, what we have been doing or thinking of all day), *so a fool's voice comes with a multitude of words; i. e.* he utters a great deal of incoherent, confused stuff, &c. Or thus, The voice of a fool comes *in* a multitude of words. And then the sense will run thus: As a multitude of business tires a man, and makes him but dream at last about it (and therefore he had better leave off, before he be unfit to attend it), so when a man enlarges himself too far in his prayers or discourses of God, he doth but babble in the conclusion, and therefore had better be shorter.

[*d*] Ver. 4. And now follows the third advice, about the *performing* of vows that have been *made*. Which is double; first, not to delay the performance, nor put it off from time to time (which is the subject of this verse), lest we be tempted, at last, not to perform our vows at all; which is the second thing: of which he speaks in the next words, ver. 5. 6. where he cautions against excuses which men are apt to make for not being as good as their intentions. Greg. Thaumaturgus hath expressed both excellently in a few words (alluding to the Hebrew word שלם which signifies to *complete*), Ἐπαγγελία δὶ εὐχῆς γινομένη τέλος λαμβανέτω δ' ἔργου. *A promise being made by a vow, let it receive its perfection (*or *completion) by performance:* and that with all speed, as soon as it is due. For a vow is an imperfect sort of a thing till it be made good: it hath only the beginning of a good thing, and wants its finishing; which, if it have not, it becomes ugly and odious. For God loves not (that is, hates) to be so dealt withal, as if he did either not understand, or not mind, what we say to him; or would put up that affront which the poorest man cannot but resent. Who looks upon himself as not only abused, but despised, when men give him fair words, which either have no meaning, or deceive him when he depends upon them. This Solomon represents in the fifth verse as far worse than promising nothing at all; in which men may be unkind, but in this they are unjust.

[*e*] Ver. 6. And he presseth it farther in this verse, where by *malach, angel*, there are those that understand that particular angel, which is supposed by some (but cannot be certainly proved) to attend upon every particular person; others understand the *priest*, who is God's *minister:* but I have followed Mr. Mede, (book ii. p. 438.) who takes *angel* here *collectively*, for more than one, as *tree* is put for *trees, leaf* for *leaves*, Gen. iii. 2. 7. which attended upon the Divine Majesty in his house, where the vow he is here speaking of was made, (ver. 1.) Which angelical ministry in God's house was represented to the Jews, by filling all the curtains of the tabernacle with the pictures of cherubims, (Exod. xxvi. 36, 37.) and by carving the inside of the walls of Solomon's temple with the same, (1 Kings vi.) and by the ark of the testimony being overspread with two mighty cherubims (having their wings lifted up, and their faces looking down towards it, and towards the mercy-seat), called the *cherubims of glory, i. e.* of the Divine presence, (Heb. ix. 5.) And all to signify, that where God's sacred memorial is, there the blessed angels, out of duty, give their attendance; and therefore the LXX. I observe, in this place, instead of *before the angel,* have πρὸ προσώπου τοῦ Θεοῦ, *before the face or presence of God:* whose ministers the angels were, and before whom the vows men engaged themselves in being made; they were witnesses also, and avengers of their excuses, or of their delays, to make them good.

As for the Vulgar translation of those words [*it is an error*], which is this, *there is no providence;* I have taken no notice of it, because it doth not seem to be the genuine meaning: for why should a man make any vows, who believes no providence over him? Unless we will say, that he might alter his opinion afterward; and so we may put both senses together thus: *I was in an error: there was no providence; and therefore I need not trouble myself about my vows.*

[*f*] Ver. 7. In these words he concludes his discourse about religion, with a repetition (as some take it) of the third verse, a little varied and enlarged. Which may be thus paraphrased, according to our translation: *To sum up all that concerns this matter; since in a multitude of words, as dreams, there must needs be much vanity; therefore have a greater reverence of God than to speak any thing rashly, or to make larger promises to him, than thou art truly willing to make good.*

In the Hebrew the words run thus: *But from a multitude of dreams (*or *when dreams are multiplied) both vanity and words are multiplied; therefore fear thou God.* Which may have this meaning: They do but merely dream of God, and are not awakened to a lively sense of him, who make either those vain excuses, or those idle promises: of which that thou mayest not be guilty, possess thy soul with an

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awful dread of his majesty. This is exactly agreeable to the Hebrew, if we take *vanities* to relate unto the excuses of ignorance or error beforementioned, and *words* and *promises:* and by *multitude of dreams,* understand a great many conceptions concerning God; more like dreams, than waking thoughts of him.

Interpreters explain the words many other ways, whom the learned reader may consult: I have followed my own conjectures; and shall also propound another translation of the words, which seems to me very natural and easy; which is this: *When, in abundance, dreams, and vanities, and words, are multiplied, then fear thou God.* That is, have a great care of thyself, and let the dread of God overawe thee, lest thou offend, when thy head is hot and full of dreams and vain imaginations, which dispose thee to speak abundantly.

[*g*] Ver. 8. As the foregoing verse concluded his discourse about religion, so this concludes the third *general* head, whereby he demonstrates the vanity of all things, begun iii. 16. Which he here admonishes us, should not too much disturb, much less quite astonish us: because God will set all right in his due time. So he began it, iii. 17. and so he here ends it in this verse. Which hath some difficulty in the last part of it; which we translate, *He that is higher than the highest,* &c. Word for word, *High above the high observeth.* But מעל in Hebrew never signifies simply *above,* but always *from above,* or *from on high;* and therefore so should be translated here, *He that is high from on high observeth.* And then the only question is, who is meant by the *high;* whether God or his vicegerent, the king here on earth. I have expounded it of the latter; because otherways the same thing must be said over again immediately, which is not unusual, indeed, in Scripture; but where there is no necessity of it, and where the words will better bear another sense, they are not to be so construed. And the last word of the verse will no way be so plain, as by referring it both to the high person mentioned before, and to all his inferior potentates and judges, whom he observes from on high; that is, from his throne, or from his seat of judgment. Where he ought to call them to an account, and examine any complaints that are made against them; or if he do not, both he and they are observed by the supreme Judge of all, and shall be accountable to him, whether they will or not.

[*h*] Ver. 9. And now he seems in this next verse to make a transition to the fourth *general* head (mentioned in the beginning), concerning the vanity of those, who place their happiness in getting and heaping up a great deal of money.

It is an obscure verse, both in its connexion and in some of its phrases; and therefore is diversely expounded by interpreters. To help out the connexion, I have made bold to preface a little, and also to add such a conclusion, in my Paraphrase upon it, as I took to be most agreeable to what follows, and to what went before. I have expressed also both senses of the last clause, which we render, *the king is served by the field;* but may more literally be translated, *the king is a servant* (or is *addicted*) *to the field.* For anciently the greatest persons did not think it below them to follow husbandry (whose just praises Cicero hath given in his Offices, but especially in his book de Senectute), as we are taught by the examples of Hiero, Philometor, Attalus, Archelaus, Cyrus the younger, in profane story; and by the example of king Uzziah in Scripture, (2 Chron. xxii. 10.) Which did not at all abate their courage, or dull their wit; but only made the one more patient of toil and labour, and the other more solid and more serious. Whence it is that we find the greatest captains among the Romans, such as Camillus, Regulus, Fabius, Cato, Cincinnatus, were fetched from the plough: as Gideon among the Israelites was from the thrashing-floor; and Elisha called to the high office of a prophet, as he was driving one of the twelve ploughs his father had going in the field.

And therefore Maldonate's translation of these words is not to be despised; who (and he alone, as I can find) thinks they are capable of being rendered thus: *By following husbandry diligently, a man may grow so rich as to become a king.* Melancthon alone translates the whole verse thus: *The king in the earth is above all for the tillage of the field.* Where Solomon, saith he, distinguisheth a *king* from a *tyrant.* A tyrant depopulates his country, and lays all waste; a good king cherishes his people, especially honest husbandmen and farmers: and loves to see them thrive, together with all good arts. The Vulgar Latin, I suppose, aimed at something of this, though it be taken otherwise by those that follow it. Agreeable to which is this memorable passage in a Persian writer, quoted by Mr. Pocock, (in his notes upon Abulfarajii, p. 202, 203.) "That in that country they kept a solemn feast every year; wherein the king descended from his throne, laid aside his royal apparel, threw away the veil from his face, and conversed with most ordinary people, even with the country swains and husbandmen, with whom he ate, saying, *I am one of you; nor can the world subsist without tillage, which is performed by your pains;* and that tillage subsists, it *is owing to the king: so that neither of us being able to subsist without the other, we are, as it were, individual brethren.*"

There are those that comprehend pasturage, as well as tillage, under these words; because the ancient patriarchs were shepherds. But there is no need of this; and husbandry or gardening was far more ancient: even as old as Adam; and after the flood we find Noah thus employed; as Isaac also was in succeeding times.

[*i*] Ver. 10. The latter end of this verse runs thus in the Hebrew text: *Whoso loveth (viz.* silver) *reaps no fruit of his abundance; i. e.* doth not enjoy it, as St. Jerome expounds it; which is very often the miserable condition of worldly-minded men.

[*k*] Ver. 11. The latter end of this verse, also, is capable of contrary senses; which I have expressed in the Paraphrase, but shall not give an account of it here, because I see these Annotations already grow too large. For which cause I will not note particularly every thing that is observable in the following verses; but only touch upon some of them, under this observation, that he seems to demonstrate the vanity of that sort of happiness which men place in riches, from ten considerations. The two first are contained in the tenth verse, that the desires of such men are insatiable; and the more insatiable they are the less they enjoy of what they have.

The third and fourth in the eleventh verse; that if they will enjoy it, the more they have, the more others must also have of it; and the pleasure of this is very small; being

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no more than to behold a great many people eat and drink at their cost.

[*l*] The fifth, ver. 12. that their servants commonly sleep more sweetly than they. For so *haofed* (which we translate *labouring man*) signifies, *one that serves;* that undertakes work for another; or any way *ministers* unto him.

[*m*] The sixth, that their riches expose them to the danger even of their life; by poison, or by open violence, ver. 13. Where the first words *rai chole, sore evil,* import such an evil *as makes one sick,* when he thinks of it, especially when he fears it. For the Hebrew word *chalah* always carries in it the notion of *sickness* and *weakness;* and that sometimes accompanied with *pain* and *torment,* (as in the case of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1.) and proceeding from a deadly wound; as in the case of Ahab, (1 Kings xxii. 34.) It may therefore be translated here a *tormenting* or a *deadly* evil, or an evil that *disables* a man, and makes him so feeble and languishing, that he is unfit for any thing. For the LXX. frequently render the noun that comes from hence ἀῤῥωστία: see ver. 17. of this chapter.

[*n*] And, seventhly, though they escape these dangers, there are many other ways whereby their riches may be lost; which seem to be included in that phrase, (ver. 14.) *injan na, an evil business, or matter,* which may signify, as well the way of their perishing, as that they perish with the great *grief* and affliction of him that loseth them. Whether that *way* be by their very merchandise in the way of their trade; or by their own frauds and subtilties in traffic, whereby they overreach themselves; or, lastly, by other accidents, as we call them, such as fire, storms, &c.

And then follows the eighth, that he leaves his son a beggar; which is no small trouble to them both, he having bred his son in expectation of an estate, which never comes to him; or if it do, neither father nor son can enjoy it longer than their lives, (ver. 14, 15.) Which is the ninth thing: if their riches do not leave them, they must leave their riches, (ver. 16.)

[*o*] And whilst they live (which is the last, ver. 17.) they spend their time, perhaps, either in filthy lusts (as Gregory Thaumaturgus understands those words, *eateth in darkness*) with vile harlots; or in wretched niggardice, and such sordid penuriousness, that the *miser* even eats up himself; taking no joy, no comfort, in any thing that he possesseth. So *darkness* signifies, being opposed to *light* in Scripture, which denotes joy and gladness: and thus the LXX. here explain it by adding a word, *in darkness and in mourning.* It may refer also to his dismal habitation (to which I have had respect in the Paraphrase) in some by-place, where he hopes nobody can find him; or in a room, whose windows are shut up and barred for fear of thieves.

The last clause of this verse runs thus, word for word, in the Hebrew; *Sorrow is multiplied* (or *there is much sorrow*), *and sickness, and wrath:* the force of which I hope I have expressed in the Paraphrase: and shall only note, that the first word *sorrow* (as was observed chap. i.) includes in it *indignation,* together with heaviness; and the next word *sickness,* includes in it *pain* and *anguish,* as was observed before: and the last word *(ketzeph) wrath,* denotes the highest commotion of that sort. For being applied to the sea, it signifies such a boiling rage as makes it foam. There is another word, indeed, which we render *hot displeasure:* but this is joined with it (Psal. xxxvii. 1.) as equivalent to it, or the effect of it.

[*p*] From all which he concludes this chapter, as he had done his discourse upon the foregoing subjects, with this meditation (which some call *sententia intercalaris*), that the greatest blessing a man can enjoy in this life, is to have a heart to use what God hath given him, for his own honest pleasure; with due acknowledgments to God, and charity to others, ver. 18—20. where (ver. 19.) there are two words to express *abundance of worldly good,* as I have paraphrased them. The last of them, *nekasim,* is larger than the former, comprehending all manner of goods (cattle and all) which a man gathers together. For it seems, by a transposition of letters, to be derived from *kanas,* to *collect,* or *gather;* (ii. 8.) from which comes the Latin word *census;* the *revenues* which a man is esteemed to have, and accordingly is rated and pays subsidies.

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

The first ten verses, at least, of this chapter, are a continuation of the same argument he handled in the latter part of the foregoing: and therefore ought to be connected with it. For they set forth the vanity of riches in the possession of a covetous wretch: who only increases the number of unhappy men in this world; being never the better for any thing he enjoys, as he shews in the conclusion of the chapter.

Ver. 1. *THERE is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men.*] But, alas! this Divine benefit, though above all others, is coveted by very few: for I have observed this most wretched, miserable humour reigning among mankind; which, though it be the greatest mischief, is grown so common, that it hath overspread the face of the whole earth. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.*] When a man is blessed by God, with such abundance of money, and goods, and height of honour, that he need not, unless he will, want any thing which his largest desires can wish should administer to his pleasure; yet so great is his ingratitude to God, and his uncharitableness to men, that for these and other sins, God denies him the power to enjoy these gifts of his bounty, to which he is a slave, rather than their master: for he possesses them, as if they were not his own, but kept by him for somebody else; and those not his children, nor his kindred, but a mere stranger, perhaps; who (either in his lifetime, or after he is dead) devours all that he hath saved. What can be more senseless than this? nay, what sorer plague can infest mankind? See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *If a man beget a hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.*] Unless it be this, that one of this sort of men, being blessed also with abundance of children, and with an exceeding long life; yet thereby is made only so much the more, and so much

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the longer, miserable: being so solicitous for posterity, that he hath no heart to take the comfort of any thing he possesses at present; no, nor so much as to take order for his decent funeral when he is dead; but he goes out of the world without any notice that he hath lived in it. Of such a one I pronounce, that an abortive, which came into the world before its time, is not so despicable as he. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *For he cometh in with vanity, and parteth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.*] For though in this they are both alike, that they come into the world to no purpose; and go out of it so obscurely, that nobody minds their departure; and leave no memory behind them that they have been in it: See Annot. [*d*.]

Ver. 5. *Moreover, he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.*] Yet in this they differ, that an abortive, having never seen the light of the sun, much less been acquainted with any thing in this world, had no desire to enjoy that of which it was perfectly ignorant, and was as utterly insensible of grief and pain, as it was of joy and pleasure: whereas this man's insatiable desires, carrying him after every thing he sees, torment his soul with anxious thoughts, care, and labour; which not only make him pine away with grief for what he cannot get, but deprive him of the comfort of what he hath. And how much better is it never to live at all, than to live only to disquiet a man's self with restless solicitude of mind, and toilsome pains of body, for that which he can neither keep, nor part withal, with any contentment?

Ver. 6. *Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?*] Men are so fond of life, indeed, that because the one lives long, and the other not at all, they imagine the former to be incomparably more happy: but let us suppose this covetous wretch to live more than as long again as the oldest man that ever was, what is he the better for it, when his greedy desires, not suffering him to enjoy his goods, multiply his miseries equally to his years? Which will expire also at last, and then, what are his riches able to do for him? can they privilege him from going down into the grave, and rotting there like the abortive? See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 7. *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.*] And while he lives, to what purpose is his restless labour? Seeing if he desire only what is necessary, it is easily provided; and, having food and raiment, a man may be contented: and if he extend his desires farther, they are infinite; and therefore can never meet with any satisfaction.

Ver. 8. *For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?*] For let a man be otherways never so wise as well as rich, yet if he bridle not his desires, he is little better than a fool: and he that is poor, but hath so much understanding as to know how to behave himself among men suitably to his condition, and to be contented therewith, is incomparably the wiser and the happier man. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 9. *Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.*] It being much better to enjoy what a man hath at present, than to live upon the hopes of that which his ravenous desires continually pursue: which sure is a very foolish thing, and another great part of the miseries of human life: that men are still craving more, when they know not how to use what they have already; and, neglecting what they possess, wish for that which, perhaps, they cannot get; or, if they do, can give them no more satisfaction than what they possess. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 10. *That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.*] And what if a man have already arrived at great renown (as well as riches), still it is notorious that he is but a man, made out of the dust: and therefore weak, and frail, and subject to many disastrous events: which it is not possible for him, by his most anxious cares, to prevent, or, by his power and wealth, to throw off when he pleases. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 11. *Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?*] And since there are so many things, and of great consideration, that add to the natural uncertainty which attends all worldly enjoyments, what can a man promise himself from all his cares? and how frivolous are his hopes? and how senseless are they, when they will not suffer him to enjoy any thing, for fear of diminishing that heap, which they would fain increase? See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 12. *For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?*] For (beside all that hath been said) there is this great mischief will still remain; that if he should attain his hopes, he cannot tell whether it would not have been better for him to have been disappointed: for, alas! what man is there that hath skill enough to know, whether that eminent station (for instance) to which he aspires will prove so good for him as the private condition wherein he is? And the same doubt may be made of all other things which he desires in this short life: which passes away insensibly, but very swiftly, and ends in the like uncertainty, what shall become of a man's family and possessions, which he leaves behind him when he departs out of this world? See Annot. [*i*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. *Common.*] Covetous wretches, it seems, were no rare creatures in those days, but the nation of the Jews abounded with them; being of the same humour they are now, scraping up riches by right or wrong, which they scarce ever enjoy. But I have expressed also the other sense of the word *rabba*, which signifies *great*, (Gen. vi. 5.) as well as *many* or *frequent*.

[*b*] Ver. 2. *Riches*, &c.] He describes in this verse the ridiculousness, as well as the misery, of this penurious humour; by the example of a man who wants nothing, and yet wants all that he hath; being like one that stands up to the chin in water, but fears to take a sip to quench his thirst. For to those two words, *riches* and *wealth* (mentioned in the nineteenth verse of the foregoing chapter), he here adds a third, to express the greatest plenty, *viz. glory:* which is more comprehensive than the other; including in it all those goodly things which may do a man credit, and raise him to a splendid condition in this world. For so Laban's sons call the ample possessions which Jacob had got in their father's service, *all this glory*, (Gen. xxxi. 1.) or *substance*, as some render it: which made him (as we

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now speak) a *substantial man;* for it denotes any thing that hath *weight* in it, and makes a man to be *valued.*

Evil disease.] That which was called *raa choleh,* a *sore evil,* (v. 13. 16.) is here called *choli ra,* an *evil disease, sad sickness,* or *grievous torment.* Which is only an inversion of the words, the same sense being still preserved.

[*e*] Ver. 3. *Days of his years,* &c.] He seems to represent in this verse a higher degree of that *evil disease,* by the example of one who hath not only great store of money, and lands, and honour, but also abundance of children; and such firm health, that he lives to a great age. Which is expressed by two phrases, which we translate thus, *lived many years, so that the days of his years be many:* but to avoid tautology, the latter clause should be thus translated, *and the days of his years be abundantly sufficient:* so many, that he cannot reasonably expect or desire more. For thus *rab* signifies in many places, where we translate it *enough;* Gen. xxiv. 25. *straw and provender enough:* Gen. xxxiii. 11. *I have enough, my brother.* And yet this man, thus abundantly provided for a long happiness, doth no good, either to others or to himself, with what he possesses: but grudges even the expenses of a funeral, after he can hold his riches no longer. So I understand those words, *he have no burial.* Which are generally understood, I confess, of lying neglected, without any interment: which the Hebrews (every one knows) look upon as a great judgment: (see Jer. xxii. 19.) and so Anton. Corranus glosses upon these words: "By the just judgment of God, such wretches, who would not feed the poor while they lived, become the food of dogs, or crows, when they are dead."

[*d*] Ver. 4. *He cometh in.*] Is born.

With vanity.] Or *in vain, to no purpose.* Which some refer to the *covetous* wretch, others to the *abortive,* beforenamed: but I have referred to both. For this makes the clearest sense; if in the next verse (ver. 5.) we suppose that he compares these two together, and prefers the latter before the former; as he plainly doth in the conclusion of it.

[*e*] Ver. 6. *Sees no good.*] To *see,* is to enjoy, as the phrase is used in many places: particularly Lev. xx. 17. John xvii. 24. And the sense of this verse is, That the *life* of a covetous man is so far from making him happier, than he who never lives at all; that if he should live as long again as Methuselah, he would only be so much the more wretchedly miserable. For when he hath tired himself with labour, he hath not taken one step towards satisfaction: which he might have had with less pains, if he had taken the right course to it, (ver. 7.)

[*f*] Ver. 8. *What hath.*] There is so great a difficulty in this verse, that I did not know how to connect it with the foregoing, but by taking the latter part of the sentence as if Solomon had said, *What comparison is there between him (viz.* the man beforenamed) *and the poor that knows how to walk before the living? i. e.* the poor man, who hath so much skill as to know how to live well, is infinitely to be preferred before him, whose wisdom still leaves him such a fool, that it doth not restrain his superfluous appetites. And this suits well with the next words, (ver. 9.) where the *sight of the eyes,* being opposed to the *wandering of the desire;* it is reasonable to take it for the fixedness of a man's mind, to rest satisfied in what is before him: that is, in things present.

Or the words may admit of this construction (which is come into my mind since I wrote the Paraphrase), *What excellence is there in the wise man* (that is, in the opinion of the wretch beforementioned there is none) *more than in a fool, especially if he be poor,* &c. That is, to all other miseries of the rich churls, that is commonly added, that they are very ignorant of what is most truly valuable: having no esteem of the wisest man in the world, no more than of a fool. Nay, they prefer a rich fool before a poor wise man; who knows how to carry himself so decently, that he is not afraid to appear before any man living. This is a great sottishness, (ver. 9.) and breeds no less sorrow; to be led by blind appetites, and not by reason and judgment. For so the words of the ninth verse may be interpreted: *Better it is to understand aright, than to follow after one's desires.*

[*g*] Ver. 10. *That which hath been.*] The sense that I have given of the beginning of this verse (taking the first word for an interrogation, and *name* for renown, as is common in Scripture) seems to me to be the most simple, and most agreeable to the whole discourse. And it is that which Melanchon hath expressed in these words, "Although a man grow famous, yet it is known that he is but a man; and he cannot contend with that which is stronger than himself." That is, he cannot govern events. But I shall mention two other interpretations, which some give of it. One is this, *As he was made at first, so his name was given him; i. e.* the name of Adam, signifying that he was taken out of the earth, and therefore mortal. The other is this; *He that hath been, his name is called already;* that is, his memory is abolished together with himself. This is Maldonate's sense; but is not agreeable to the Hebrew phrase, *his name is called;* for that in the Scripture signifies rather the contrary, *viz. fame,* and honourable mention, as I have expressed it word for word out of the Hebrew, in the Paraphrase. The common interpretation may be found in all commentators, which is this; that *God hath appointed what every man shall be; whether rich or poor,* &c. *and therefore it is in vain for them to contrive as they do, to be other than what they are.* For it is to endeavour to alter that which is immutably settled by the Almighty.

[*h*] Ver. 11. *Seeing there be.*] This verse sums up all this matter about riches; or, as others will have it, the whole foregoing discourse, concerning all those four things, wherein men place their happiness: whether *wisdom, pleasure, honour,* or *wealth.* Which draw so *many* and so *great* (for the Hebrew word includes both) inconveniences along with them; as sufficiently demonstrate a man is still to seek for the satisfaction of his desires, if he look no farther.

And so they would have the last verse to be an introduction to the following discourse in the next chapter: where he shews, wherein that true and solid happiness lies, which mankind vainly pursue in the forenamed enjoyments. But I have connected it with what goes before in this chapter: as the particle *(for)* in the beginning of it shews it ought to be.

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

Having discoursed, in the foregoing part of the book, of the courses men take to make themselves happy; he now seems to proceed to prescribe the best remedies that can

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be found against that vanity to which we are subject: by setting down many wise precepts for our direction and conduct, support and comfort, in a troublesome world. Where, it is confessed, that our happiness can be but imperfect; yet so much we may attain as to be well satisfied, and not vex ourselves that we cannot make things more certain and constant; nor dispose men to be more just and equal to us than they are.

And if we examine the following *particulars*, we shall find they are comprehended in this *general* direction; *the change of our mind, thoughts, and opinions:* which must be quite altered; for that things which now look like *paradoxes*, must be judged the greatest wisdom. Such are all the doctrines that begin this chapter (quite opposite to the common opinions of the world), That a good name is to be preferred before precious ointment, and the day of one's death before one's birth-day; mourning before feasting; sadness before laughter; rebukes before commendations; the end of a thing before the beginning of it; a patient, suffering spirit before a stout, haughty mind; wisdom before riches, &c. These and such-like are the maxims of true wisdom and piety, which must be learnt; in order to the settlement of our minds in peace and tranquillity: notwithstanding the vanity that is in all things.

Ver. 1. *A GOOD name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.*] But though there be such uncertainty in all other things, yet a good name, which a man gets by a virtuous life, is lasting and durable: and as the conscience of well-doing gives a greater pleasure to the mind for the present, than the most fragrant ointment can do to the senses of voluptuous men, so the fame of it will remain after he is dead; and he will still live in a good report, when all those sensual joys expire, like the vapour of the ointment, which is soon dispersed and lost after it is poured out: and therefore, if we would be happy, we ought to order our life in such a manner, that death, which fools and wicked men fear, may be welcome to us; and only let us out of the troubles into which we are brought at our birth. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.*] And, that it may befriend us, it is our wisdom to think often of it; and consequently, choose rather to converse with things that will make us serious, than with those which will make us merry: to go, for instance, into the company of those who are mourning for the dead, rather than of those who are feasting for joy that a child is born into the world: for in the midst of those pleasures we are apt to be dissolute and to forget ourselves: but that sad spectacle inclines us naturally to be considerate, and disposes our mind to humility, modesty, gentleness, sobriety, and charity: when, in one we see the fate of all; and we follow him to his grave, who a little while agone, perhaps, was as vigorous and strong as ourselves. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.*] Sadness, therefore, and sorrow, are much more profitable for us than mirth and jollity (as we see in those severe and stern rebukes, which make men sorrowful for their faults), because that grief which makes a man look sadly, whether it be for his own sins, or other men's calamities, is apt to do his soul good; by giving him a right understanding of God, and of himself, and of all things else. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning: but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*] Whence it is, that wise men affect to think of such things, when they do not see them, as shew them how vain all our enjoyments are: but fools seek all occasions to put by such thoughts, and to divert themselves with merriment and pleasure. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.*] And he that would be in the number of these wise men, must look upon this as one of the first steps towards it, to lend an obedient ear unto the reproofs of him who is truly wise and virtuous: which, though never so sharp and rough, are to be infinitely preferred before the smooth praises and commendations of a great many fools. Nay, ought to sound more gratefully in our ears, than the most delicious music, songs, and jests, of all the merry companions in the world. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity.*] These jolly fellows, indeed, make a great noise and show; as if they were the only men that enjoy this world: but, alas! their mirth and joy are but for a spurt, and then end in heaviness: like the crackling of thorns, which sometimes blaze under a pot, as if they gave a mighty heat; but leave the water in it as cold as they found it.

All their jollity, therefore, is vanity. See Annot. [*f*].

Ver. 7. *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.*] And there is the greater need to be well instructed, and therefore to hearken to the wise, (ver. 5.) because there are other things, besides vain pleasures and flatteries, to disturb and unsettle our minds, if we be not well fortified against them. For the better any man is, the more he is in danger to suffer from slanderers, revilers, and all sorts of injurious persons: whose violence sometimes is so great, that unless a man be provided with more than human wisdom (and it be deeply rooted in his heart), it will not only miserably disquiet, but even distract him. Nor is this his only danger; but that power and authority which raise him above the former, may expose him to another; unless he be armed with great integrity: for his mind may be corrupted by gifts and presents to do injustice unto others, which he hates should be done to himself. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.*] And he will be the better able to resist them both, who is so wise as to look, not merely to the beginning of them, but attend to their conclusion: for that which seems grievous at the first appearance, in the issue proves very advantageous; and, on the contrary, that which promises fair at first hath a deadly farewell with it; and therefore it is much better to endure patiently, and humbly wait to see the issue, than to be provoked by pride and disdain hastily to precipitate events; for he that scorns to wait and attend upon the leisure progression of things, commonly undoes himself and his affairs, by his fierce and violent attempts, presently to compass his desires. See Annot. [*h*]

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Ver. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*] It is another point therefore of that wisdom, which must make us happy, to repress the motions of anger that we feel in ourselves, and not suffer them, without great deliberation, to have any effect: for anger is an enemy to counsel and advice, and is, indeed, the property of fools; who, out of weakness of mind, and shortness of thoughts, are familiarly transported with it, upon the slightest causes; and not easily appeased again, as wise men are when they chance to be incensed.

Ver. 10. *Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*] It is wisdom also to correct in ourselves that complaining humour which is apt to be ever finding fault with the present times, and commending the foregoing ages as far better and happier than the present. For perhaps it is not true; and thus much is certain, that he is foolishly inconsiderate, who imagines, that *then* there was no evil, and that *now* there is no good: or if it be true, that there was more good in those times, let us not murmur and repine, asking why we are cast into a troublesome age, full of oppression, suppose, and violence, and wrong, (ver. 7.) but rather submit to the providence of God; considering, that there is no age so bad as to hinder us (which is the principal point of wisdom) from being good: and therefore let us do our duty; believing God hath such reason for suffering the times to be as they are, that we have no reason to quarrel at them; or to call in question his wisdom, goodness, or justice. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 11. *Wisdom is good with an inheritance; and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.*] Yet do not think that wisdom or virtue consists in despising riches; but only in using them well when we have them, and in being contented without them; for as we cannot be happy by riches alone, without wisdom, so we cannot be completely happy with wisdom alone, without riches: for he hath a vast advantage to do good every way who is rich as well as wise; it giving him an authority even to speak more freely than other men; and making what he speaks to be more regarded: but of the two, wisdom and virtue must always be preferred; which can do greater things, and bestow nobler benefits upon mankind, than treasures alone can do. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 12. *For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*] For as wisdom, for instance, contrives many ways whereby a man may innocently defend himself from danger; so can money ofttimes purchase his protection and safety: but herein is the pre-eminence of wisdom, that when neither of them can shelter a man, nor stave off the calamity that invades him, it marvellously supports, revives, and comforts the souls of those who are owners of it, under all the evils which it could not help them by honest means to avoid. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 13. *Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?*] And in order to it, the highest piece of wisdom is, to live in a serious sense of the sovereign power of God; and to consider, that as he hath settled all things in heaven and earth, in an unchangeable course, so nothing comes to pass without his providence: with which it is in vain to struggle, when he is pleased either to cross us in any of our private designs; or to send any public calamity, which, by our art and power, we can neither avoid nor remedy. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 14. *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.*] No, we ought rather to accommodate ourselves to the present state of things; and when we are in prosperity, to enjoy God's blessings cheerfully, with thankful and charitable hearts; but so soberly also, as not forgetting that affliction may come: and when it doth, let us take it patiently, considering, among other things, that there may be a change to a better condition again: for as both the one and the other come from God, so he hath ordered they should have their turns in such due season, and balanced one with the other with such exactness, that the meanest man hath no reason to complain of him; nor the greatest to fancy himself more than a man; who cannot invent any means to dispose things otherwise, much less better, than God hath done. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 15. *All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.*] I know what may be objected to this, having, all my life long, made observations upon all manner of things, in this troublesome world, and it seems very hard that a just man's integrity should not be able to preserve him; but he is therefore, perhaps, destroyed, because he is better than others; when a wicked man escapes, nay, is countenanced and encouraged, or suffered to prolong his days in (and perhaps by) his wickedness. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver 16. *Be not righteous over-much; neither make thyself otherwise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?*] But besides other things which may be replied to this (as that good men are sometimes removed from, and wicked reserved unto, future evils), it must be noted also, that some pious men are more strict and rigid than they need, and not so prudent as they ought to be; but unnecessarily expose themselves to danger. And therefore, it is good advice, in order to a safe and quiet passage through this life, to be temperate in thy zeal, and not to overdo; either by extending thy own duty beyond the Divine commandment, or by correcting the inveterate vices of others, and opposing the vulgar opinions too severely or unseasonably; whereby they are only exasperated and enraged, but not at all amended: for why should a man bring a mischief upon himself, without any benefit unto others? See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 17. *Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?*] And, on the other side, let not impunity tempt any man to presume to grow enormously wicked, and foolish, as to embrace and follow the lewdest opinions: for this may awaken the public justice against him, even for the common safety; or the Divine vengeance, nay, his own excessive wickedness, may cut him off, before he come to the natural term of his life. See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 18. *It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.*] The advice is so profitable, that he who loves himself will not only apprehend it, but take fast hold of it, and diligently observe it; never departing from either part of it; but, while he wisely manages himself to decline dangers, honestly and faithfully

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performs his duty: for nothing can do a man so much service in this, as a true fear of offending the Divine Majesty; which will preserve him both from rash and heady forwardness, and from consulting merely his own private safety and interest. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 19. *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.*] And this pious prudence, which proceeds from the fear of God, will be a stronger guard and security to him who is endued with it, both against all inward fears and all outward dangers, than a multitude of valiant commanders, and all their troops are, to defend a city, when it is besieged by its enemies. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 20. *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*] Though this must always be understood, when we thus discourse, that no man is either so perfectly wise, or completely virtuous, as never to mistake and commit a fault; but sometimes the best of us may slip into a sin, notwithstanding all our caution and care; and thereby fall into danger. See Annot. [q]

Ver. 21. *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*] The consideration of which frailty of mankind is useful many ways; not only to abate our severity in censuring or chastising public offenders, but to teach us gentleness towards those who do us private injuries: and therefore not to regard (for instance) every word that is spoken against us, but rather to dissemble our knowledge of it; first, because otherwise we shall have no quiet; for, perhaps, we may chance to overhear our own domestics speaking slightly of us; which we may easily pass by and overlook, but cannot take notice of without great disturbance. See Annot. [r]

Ver. 22. *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.*] And secondly, because, if thou examinest thy own life, thou wilt find this fault is so incident to human nature, that thou thyself perhaps hast been guilty of it many a time; and done as much by others that are thy betters as thy servant doth by thee.

Ver. 23. *All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me.*] For my part, I cannot exempt myself from the guilt of great errors: for though I have not only studied to be wise and virtuous, but made a trial of the excellence of all these rules which I have now delivered; and resolved also that I would strictly observe them, and never, in the least, swerve from them; yet, alas! I fell far short of these holy purposes. See Annot. [s]

Ver. 24. *That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?*] That which I have done already, in time past, is far from the wisdom whereby I intended to have acted; and who can tell, when he once sinks below himself, how much deeper and deeper he shall be plunged in sin, till he cannot find his way out again?

Ver. 25. *I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.*] Notwithstanding which I did not cease my endeavours, but diligently looked every where, and viewed every corner, even of my heart; making the most exquisite search after the surest means to attain that wisdom and virtue which I desired and laboured for above all things; and to be settled, upon firm grounds, in my holy resolutions: for which end, I likewise endeavoured to understand what is the very height of folly and wickedness; even that wickedness which besots a man's mind, nay, turns his brain; and not only infatuates him, but makes him act as if he were distracted.

Ver. 26. *And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God, shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.*] And I found, at last, that nothing so destroys a man's understanding, nothing leads him into so many dangerous errors, and makes him quite forget himself, as that filthy lust which carries him to a harlot; who brings him into so many grievous mischiefs, that he had better die than be acquainted with her: for she is made up of wicked arts and wily devices, and doth nothing but contrive how to ensnare and entangle him that approaches her; whom she holds so fast by her charms that he remains her prisoner for ever, without a wonderful grace to deliver him: which he hath little reason to expect, when he considers, that it is commonly some other great offences against God that betray him into these snares; from which he, who approves himself sincerely unto God, finds so much favour with him, as to be preserved. See Annot. [t]

Ver. 27. *Behold, this I have found (saith the Preacher), counting one by one, to find out the account.*] Behold then the result of my most serious thoughts, which I publicly proclaim to all, and would have it diligently observed; that having distinctly considered all things, one by one, I find nothing so dangerous, and therefore nothing so much to be avoided by him, that would be steadfastly wise and good, (ver. 23.) as the conversation of women; especially those that are of a lewd inclination.

Ver. 28. *Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.*] And where to meet with any of them, with whom it is safe to have society, I am still to seek, though very desirous to find: for though here and there I have found a truly honest man, among those multitudes that attend upon me in my court, yet I cannot say that among all my acquaintance of the other sex (and I have a great many, 1 Kings xi. 1.) I have met with so much as one, that is what a woman should be; modest, plain-hearted, humble, sincerely virtuous, without guile, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. See Annot. [u]

Ver. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*] Only observe this, that I do not herein accuse (far be it from me) the Creator of the world; for I am assured of nothing more than this, that as God made all other things very good in their several kinds, so he made both men and women in perfect integrity: with a clear understanding to judge aright, and with an honest will, inclined to do accordingly; prescribing them also no other rule of life, but such as was just and good: but they, affecting to be greater than God intended, and to have more liberty than he allowed, raised scruples and doubts, questions and disputes, about their duty; inventing many ways to shift it off; and so depraved themselves, by following their own vain fancies, and false reasonings, rather than his blessed will. See Annot. [x]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Among all the maxims of true wisdom and piety, which are to be learnt for the settlement of our mind in

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peace and tranquillity, notwithstanding the *vanity* that is in all things, Solomon recommends to us, in the first place, the care of that which men foolishly lose; by minding nothing but heaping up wealth, or pleasing themselves in a voluptuous life, &c. *viz. to acquire a good name.* Which nothing but a virtuous use of all things can bestow upon us; and when we have it will give us a singular delight at present, and embalm our memory when we are laid in our graves.

Which good name (as Melancthon observes) consists in two things: in the approbation of our own consciences judging aright, and in the approbation of other men, who also rightly judge. Both which are required by God; that we should do right things, and that others should approve of what is rightly done. Unto which they are bound, for two reasons; that the difference of virtue and vice may be the more conspicuous; and that others may be taught by examples. He requires, therefore, that infamous persons be cast out of society, and that they be honoured, whose manners are without infamy. Now, since such an approbation is a Divine ordinance, it is manifest we may desire this glory; and, by the same reason, that we must avoid all scandal, and take care that we may be commended.

Which Solomon here compares to a precious ointment, because nothing was more grateful and refreshing in those eastern countries: and therefore used not only in feasts, but at other times, when they were weary or languishing; for comforting the brain, recreating the spirits, cheering the countenance, suppling the joints; and for other services tending to health, as well as pleasure. Which made ointments to be held in the greatest price and estimation, and to be mentioned among the treasures of kings, (2 Kings xx. 13. Isa. xxxix. 2.) Suitable to this is that of Pindar, *a bath of warm water doth not so refresh the tired bones as glory.* And this of Thucydides, that *honour is the nourishment and food of an old man;* who lives upon the reputation he hath gotten by worthy deeds, which will make death not unwelcome to him. So the latter part of this verse must be understood, with reference to a well-spent life; for otherways it would be only a discontented saying, like that of the heathen, *the best thing is not to be born, the next best to die presently.* Unto which doctrine (as Melancthon well speaks) the church is a stranger.

I cannot well pass over this verse without observing what all interpreters note; an elegant *paranomasia* (as they call it), that is, a near affinity, both in the letters and in the sound, of these two Hebrew words, *schem,* name, and *schemen,* oil or ointment; as there is afterward (ver. 5, 6.) between three other words, *shir,* a song, *sirim,* thorns, and *sir,* a pot. Which being found also in several other parts of the Bible, it shews that such allusions are not unseemly, nor ought to be censured as affectations; if they be sparingly used, and wisely, gravely, and decently scattered in a discourse; not fulsomely, upon every occasion, obtruded.

[*b*] Ver. 2. Now the wise man knowing that nothing stirs us up more powerfully to a religious life, than the frequent remembrance of our mortality (which, alas! we are not willing to think of), he next advises him that would be happy, to embrace all occasions that may put him in mind of it. *The meditation of death* being, as was anciently said, *the very abridgment of all philosophy.* All the precepts of wisdom they thought were comprised in this; and therefore no wonder Solomon not only begins with it, but presses it so largely as he doth in the following verses: to the end, that we may make our life not only a *meditation,* but an *exercise,* of death; which in the Christian language is called *mortification.* In short, the thoughts of death will, without any other teacher (if we keep it always in mind), instruct us in all those virtues, which will procure us a good name; some of which I have touched in the Paraphrase. And the more healthful we are, the more we had need to charge ourselves with the thoughts of it, because that is apt to make us forget it. So I have taken *chai,* not merely for *living;* but *lively,* vigorous, lusty, and flourishing, as we translate it truly, Psal. xxxviii. 19.

[*c*] Ver. 3. In the explication of this verse, I have touched upon another sense of the first word of it: which signifies not only *sorrow,* but anger or indignation also; by which some expound this verse. And understand thereby, either the anger of God afflicting men for sin, or the angry reproofs that are given sinners: which are better for them than prosperity, or to applaud and humour them in their folly. But this is mentioned ver. 5. and therefore I take it not to be intended here.

The truth of the latter part of this verse is admirably explained by St. Paul in 2 Cor. vii. 11. As for the phrase, I shall only note, that *an ill look* is an exact translation into our language of the Hebrew phrase, which is here translated *sadness of the countenance.* Now a man may *look ill* not only by sickness, but by reason of any other thing that afflicts him, (as we find in the case of Nehemiah, ii. 2.) some of which I have expressed in the Paraphrase.

[*d*] Ver. 4. *Heart.*] The thoughts, affections, and delight.

[*e*] Ver. 5. *Rebuke.*] The word includes *roughness* and severity in it; and is opposed to the smooth flatteries of those that seduce to sin. So I have understood *song* (not excluding the common sense of the word, which I have also expressed): for as the first part of wisdom is for a man to be able to give good advice to himself and others; and the next part of it, to take such advice when it is given: so it belongs to the first part, to see a man's own faults, and reprove himself for them; and to the second, to receive such reproof willingly from others, and to abhor to be flattered and soothed, as if he had no faults at all.

[*f*] Ver. 6. This comparison between rebuke and flattery, Corranus thinks is continued also in this verse; upon which he paraphrases in this manner: "As thorns put under a pot, and kindled, make such a crackling, as if they would set the whole house on fire, and by their noise raise an expectation of the greatest flame; but presently end in smoke and vapours: so senseless flatterers make a great buzzing in men's ears, and blow up their minds, extolling them to heaven with their praises; but in truth make them not one whit the better," &c. But I do not see how the word *laughter* can be well applied to this; and therefore I have omitted it, and only thought fit here to mention it.

[*g*] Ver. 7. The connexion of this verse with the preceding is a little obscure; unless we translate it, as Maldonate doth (following Munster), *A wise man despiseth calumny, and a mind that can be corrupted with gifts:* which is an excellent admonition; and well suited to Solomon's purpose. But no interpreters besides them take the word *jeholel* in the signification of *despising* (except Forsterus,

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who takes it for making one despised, translating it thus, *calumny makes even a wise man inglorious),* but rather in the sense of *giving disturbance,* or *making mad,* as we translate it. Though a great many by *oschek* (which raiseth the disturbance in a wise man) understand that sort of oppression which comes from calumny. Particularly Melancthon herein follows the Vulgar; shewing what a most pestilent mischief this is, in all governments: whereby such excellently deserving persons as Palamedes, Aristides, Cymon, and Themistocles, were oppressed. The fountain of which vice is pride, envying the glory of others; and, that they may lessen it, misrepresenting their counsels and actions: which sophistical depravation of other men's words and deeds is called *calumny.*

But I have not confined the sense to this; the Hebrew word *oschek* signifying all sorts of oppressions, as I have noted before, either by fraud or by force. And the easiest sense of the verse seems to me that which I have expressed in the Paraphrase; by connecting it with ver. 5. as a reason why we ought to hearken even to the rebukes of the wise; that we may acquire a good habit of mind, able to hold out against oppression on the one hand, and bribery on the other: which none can do, who is not very virtuous.

And in this exposition I have taken *wise* as St. Jerome doth; not for one that is *perfect,* but for a *proficient:* who hath not yet settled wise principles in his mind.

It is possible, also, that Solomon may have respect to the oppressions which men generally endure in a state ill governed: which raises a just indignation, and holy warmth of zeal, in the best of men; but if care be not taken to repress the violence of that perturbation which this is apt to give us, it may turn into fury, and make us behave ourselves towards our superiors as men out of their wits.

[*h*] Ver. 8. I have connected this verse with the foregoing; though it may be taken alone by itself. And the word *debar,* signifying either *speech* or *thing,* some (following the Vulgar) interpret this of the care that ought to be taken in the epilogue, or close of an oration (as St. Jerome speaks), rather than in the beginning or preface to it; that, as we are wont to say, we may come off well, and leave a sting in the minds of those that hear it. But this is so wide from the wise man's purpose, that I do not think fit to set down an excellent discourse of the Lord Bacon's upon this sense of the words, (lib. viii. de Augm. Scient. parab. 10.)

And if we expound it of *things,* it is but a dilute sense to say, that *a thing perfected is better than a thing begun.* Others, therefore, take it to be the same with that, *Finis coronat opus:* which is true, but doth not complete the sense; unless we understand it in this manner; that the *conclusion of all things is to be expected, before we judge of them.* For whilst they are growing and coming on, they appear with a quite different face, from what they have when they are gone and shall be no more.

In the latter part of the verse, *patient in spirit* is properly one that is long before he grows angry, or falls into any passion; who is opposed to *proud in spirit,* because it is *high-mindedness* (as the word signifies) which makes men's passion rise and swell hastily. It may have relation to the former part, and be expounded in this manner: *A patient man, and slow to anger, dispatches business better than a proud, huffing, and blustering spirit: whose passion so disorders his mind, and indisposes it for the management of affairs, that he seldom brings them to a good issue.*

Or thus: *A proud man is a boutefeu, who begins the fray: but the patient in spirit is the man that must end it (if ever it be well ended), and that is much the better work, and the greater honour to him who is employed in it and effects it.*

Or, which is still clearer, we ought to attend to the end of a thing with patience: because it cannot be known what it will prove, nor whither it tends, in the beginning; and we should be the more prone to be patient in spirit, if we would expect the issue of every thing. Thus Corranus paraphrases upon the words most excellently, but a little too long:—" It is no small part of wisdom, to judge of things, and of business proposed to us, slowly and maturely, &c. for we see frequently that inconsiderate men, finding a thing very hard and difficult in the beginning, and never thinking how profitable and pleasant the issue may prove, immediately despond; and, out of an impatience, shall I say, or rashness of mind, desist from the most excellent enterprises; and many times betake themselves to worse. From which rashness and inconstancy he will be very far removed, who, endued with Divine wisdom, waits for the desired and happy conclusion of his affairs. And unto this nothing contributes more, than a slow, constant, and patient mind, that can endure labour and pains: which steadfastly and quietly considering how fruitful the end may be which he affects, will not suffer himself by any difficulty, trouble, or weariness, which he meets withal in the beginning, to be drawn from his purpose. Far different from those who, out of a proud, arrogant humour, think it is baseness, and unbecoming a gallant man, to attend upon the slow and leisure progresses of things, and to expect their events."

Thus he: which sense I have not neglected in my Paraphrase; but comprised it among the rest: and it is thus, in part, expressed more briefly by a wise and good man in that age; when he told his friend (who was undone because he would not mind it), that " he was like an unskilful player at tennis, ever running after the ball; whereas an expert player will stand still to observe and discern where the ball will alight, or where it will rebound; and there with small travel will let it fall on his racket, or on his hand."

[*i*] Ver. 9, 10. These two verses depend on the foregoing, shewing that *anger* is inconsistent with wisdom; and so are murmuring and repining at the hardship we meet withal in evil times. And therefore, as the same Corranus well glosses, *let us not throw the causes of our anger upon the times;* but blame ourselves, who, at all times, if we want *meekness of wisdom,* shall grow angry upon the most frivolous occasions; and not only let loose the reins of our anger, but of all other vices.

But I think this advice (ver. 10.) is not merely to be restrained to this, but extended unto all sorts of discontent, which are apt to make us complain of our present condition; and so to admire what is past, as not to mind what is present: as if they had nothing but what was good who lived before us; and we nothing but what was naught in these days. Whereas they complained just as we do now; and that of Thucydides was true then, as it ever will

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be, ἀεὶ τὸ παρὸν βαρύ, *the present is always burdensome.* Because, as Melancthon observes, we have a feeling sense of present incommodities; but know what was heretofore only by report: and so we praise those ancient times, but do not like our own, which may be as good. This we are sure of, that *all times have their troubles:* and it is the part of a wise and good man to bear them, and not to increase them by a foolish cure. According to that saying, μὴ τὸ κακὸν ἰῷ κακῷ: *let not one evil be remedied by another.* And that of Pythagoras, ὧν ἂν μοῖραν ἔχῃς φέρε μηδ' ἀγανάκτει: *what portion of things falls to thy share take it; and do not grumble nor be vexed at it.* And remember, as Corranus glosses again, that "a truly wise man is never so transported with admiration of ancient times, as to despise the present; crying out, Those were the golden, these the iron ages; nor will he solicitously inquire into the causes of what was then, and what is now; when this is certain, that virtue is the only cause of happiness, and vice of infelicity; which, in what time soever we fall, always produce the same effect." And to imagine that the ancient times had no evil in them, and ours no good, is the conceit of a man that judges inconsiderately. For our eyes ought not to be so fixed upon the present calamities of our days, as blindly to overlook all the good; nor is the ancient felicity to be so admired, as not to remember, that they also conflicted with many tempests, and perhaps greater than we, as their frequent complaints of their times do abundantly testify. He therefore that is wise and fears God, will make account (as the truth is) that it is in our own choice, by his grace, whether the times shall be good or bad; for if he live well, they cannot be bad to him; as, on the contrary, they cannot be good, if he live wickedly.

I am the longer in these observations, because they are things of mighty moment: but most of the rest I shall contract as much as is possible.

[*k*] Ver. 11. Most take this verse as denoting their happiness, who have riches as well as *wisdom;* which commonly is despised without *wealth.* But the words may bear another construction (which I have not neglected, because it agrees well with what follows), that *wisdom is equal to an inheritance; nay, much to be preferred before it.* For they may be thus translated, *Both wisdom and an inheritance are profitable for men in this world; but especially wisdom.* Or, as Maldonate renders the last clause, "et residuum est videntibus solem," *and there is a remainder to those that see the sun.* That is, when all things in this world fail us, the fruits of wisdom only remains with us.

[*l*] Ver. 12. This is farther explained in this verse: where it will be needless to do more than barely observe, that the word we render *defence* is *shadow* in the Hebrew; which in their language signifies protection and comfort; Gen. xix. 8. *For this cause they came under the shadow of my roof: i. e.* that they might be secure from violence. Numb. xiv. 9. *Their shadow* (*i. e.* protection) *is departed from them.*

[*m*] Ver. 13, 14. Here follows an admirable advice, to comply with our present condition, and suit our mind unto it: because we cannot bring things to the bent of our own mind, and therefore had better study to conform our mind to our condition, whatsoever it be; whether prosperity or adversity. Into which the Divine wisdom hath divided our life, and so proportioned them one to the other, that none can justly find fault with his Divine disposal; nor, all things considered, tell how to mend them, or order them better.

So I have understood the last clause of ver. 14. in which is the only difficulty: *find nothing after him.* Which words *(after him)* some refer unto God, and make the sense to be, that *after him* (or beside him) *a man shall find nothing certain:* and therefore it is best to depend upon him alone. Which I have not taken notice of in the Paraphrase, and therefore mention here. Others refer *after him,* unto man; and that two ways (which it may be fit just to set down). Some translate it thus: *For this end, that man may find out none of those things which shall befal him hereafter:* and so, being perfectly ignorant of what is to come, neither presume in prosperity, nor despair in adversity. Others thus (which is Maldonate's gloss): *That a man losing in time of adversity what he had gotten in prosperity, might not adhere too much to the things of this world.* Melancthon alone interprets *find nothing,* in this sense, *that he might not betake himself unto unallowed courses:* but in prosperity keep himself within the bounds of his vocation, and not be carried beyond it by vain curiosity; and in adversity expect the help of God, in the use of such remedies as he hath ordained.

[*n*] Ver. 15. This verse may either be joined with the precedent, or with the following: I have connected it with both, in my Paraphrase upon it, and ver. 16. where I have attended to the scope of the wise man in this chapter; and accordingly interpreted that and the seventeenth verse; which will admit of several other expositions.

They are commonly expounded of public justice; which ought to be neither too rigid, nor too remiss and negligent. Insomuch that Melancthon's words are, *non dubium est;* there is no doubt he speaks of political justice, which governs the things of this life: and consists in a mean, between cruelty and negligence. Too much severity becomes cruelty; as it was in Aurelian: and too much indulgence confirms men in wickedness; as it was in the days of Arcadius. A good governor, like Augustus, takes a middle course; and doth not seek that middle with too much subtilty: but rather, as in God, lets mercy prevail over judgment. The like admonition, saith he, is subjoined about wisdom: for, as too much severity becomes cruelty, so too much wisdom, that is, subtilty, becomes cavilling sophistry and cheating. And thus he interprets ver. 17. that a magistrate should not tolerate enormous vices.

Dr. Hammond alone, as far as I have read, makes the sixteenth verse, *Be not righteous over-much,* &c. to be the objection of a worldling; who takes that for an excess of duty, which brings any damage or worldly destruction upon him. Which is answered, saith he, in ver. 17. *Be not wicked over-much,* &c. that is, the fears, and from thence the prudential (but oftentimes very impious) practices of the worldling, are the more probable path, to the most hasty ruins. (Vide Answ. to Cawdry, chap. 2. sect. 2.)

But this is not coherent, in my opinion, with the rest of the chapter; and therefore I have followed rather the opinion of Gregory Nazianzen; who interprets it of heat and zeal, more than needs, without reason and discretion: which, as it makes all the schisms in the world, so produces a great many other evils. And the same passion, saith he, is both about righteousness and about wisdom:

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Θερμότης πρὶ πράξιν καὶ λόγον, ἔξω τοῦ καλλοῦ, &c. (Vide Orat. xxvi. p. 446.)

I shall omit other interpretations, (which are collected by Del Rio, and more copiously by Hackspan, lib. ii. Miscellan. cap. 1.) and mention only that of Grotius: who expounds it of a vain affectation of justice and wisdom. Which interpretation is in part followed by the Lord Bacon, (lib. viii. de Augment. Scient. cap. 2. parab. 31.) whose discourse upon the words I shall not send the reader to seek, but set it down entirely; because it is very useful: "There are times (saith Tacitus), wherein great virtues are exposed to certain ruin. And this fate befals men eminent for courage or justice; sometimes suddenly, sometimes foreseen afar off. But if *prudence* be also added to their other accomplishments; that is, if they be wary and watchful over their own safety; then they gain thus much, that their sudden destruction proceeds from counsels altogether hidden and obscure; by which both envy may be avoided, and their ruin fall upon them unprovided. As for that *nimium (over-much)* which is set down in the parable (since they are not the words of some Periander, but of Solomon, who now and then notes the evils in men's lives, but never commends them), it is to be understood, not of virtue itself (in which there is no *nimium*), but of a vain and invidious affectation and ostentation thereof.

"A point, something resembling this, the same Tacitus intimates in a passage touching Lepidus; setting it down as a miracle, that he had never been the author of any servile sentence, and yet remained safe in such cruel times. 'This thought (saith he) often comes into my mind, whether these things be governed by fate, or whether it lies also in our power to steer an even course, free both from danger and from indignity, between deformed flattery and abrupt and sullen contumacy.'"

[o] Ver. 17. There are those who, by *al tirsha*, understand not, *be not too wicked;* but, *be not too busy;* make not too great a stir and bustle about the things of this world (especially in dangerous times); do not destroy thyself by too much toil and labour; or by too much stirring, when it is better to be quiet and sit still. Of which I have taken no notice in the Paraphrase, and therefore mention it here. For though the word be not used commonly in this sense, yet it is its original signification. And the advice of the son of Sirach is something to this purpose, Ecclus. vii. 6, 7.

[p] The foregoing advice he looks upon as so useful, that he presses it farther here, (ver. 18.) and promises more security from such a religious prudence, as teaches us moderation, and yet keeps us strict to our duty, than from the greatest armies that men can raise for their defence, (ver. 19.)

For (as Melancthon observes) Alex. Pheræus was slain by his wife and his brethren; though he lay in a high tower, well garrisoned, to which none could ascend but by ladders. And the father of Alexander was slain in the midst of a public pomp, his princes and his guards looking on; as Julius Cæsar also was in the senate.

Ten mighty men] Every one knows, is, in Scripture-phrase, as much as *many* mighty men. And so Bochartus interprets that difficult place, Numb. xi. 31. where speaking of the vast quantity of quails that came into the camp, Moses saith, he that gathered least gathered *ten* omers; that is, saith the forenamed writer, *many* heaps: for so he thinks *omer* should be there translated, as it is in some other places, (lib. i. de Sacris Animal. cap. 15. p. 106. par. ii.)

[q] Ver. 20. Here he seems to limit what he had said before, with this exception; that *no man can be always so wise and cautious, as never to offend.* Which Melancthon truly calls *politica sententia:* and refers to lapses in government, like that of Josiah, who was a very good prince, but perished by engaging rashly in an unnecessary war. And therefore the character of a governor, as well as of a man, must be fetched from the constant strain and bent of his actions, and not from particular facts. For he is a good governor that always intends to do right, though he sometimes miscarry (as David and the forenamed Josiah), and he is an ill governor, who hath no such design, but quite contrary; though sometimes he do well, as Cambyses. The difference therefore must be taken from their perpetual will and inclination.

There are those who connect this verse with the next, rather than the foregoing: but I have referred it to both, and not unfitly, I think; as may be seen in the Paraphrase upon ver. 21.

[r] Ver. 21. Which the Lord Bacon (lib. viii. cap. 2. parab. 4.) refers principally to vain curiosity; and thus discourses upon it: "It is a matter almost beyond belief, what disturbance is created by unprofitable curiosity, about those things that concern our principal interest: that is, when we make a too scrupulous inquiry after such secrets, which, once disclosed and found out, do but cause disquiet of mind; and nothing conduce to the advancing of our designs. For, first, there follows *vexation and disquiet of mind:* human affairs being so full of treachery and ingratitude, that if there could be procured a magical glass, in which we might behold the hatreds, and whatsoever malicious contrivances are any where raised up against us, it would be better for us if such a glass were forthwith thrown away and broken in pieces. For things of this nature are like the murmurs of the leaves of trees, which in a short time vanish. Secondly, *this curiosity loads the mind too much with suspicions,* and ungrounded jealousies: which is the most capital enemy to counsels, and renders them inconstant and involved. Thirdly, the same curiosity doth sometimes *fix those evils which otherways of themselves would pass by us and fly away.* For it is a dangerous thing to irritate the consciences of men; who, if they think themselves to lie undiscovered, are easily changed for the better; but, if they perceive themselves to be detected, drive out one mischief by another. And therefore it was deservedly esteemed the highest wisdom in Pompey the Great, that he instantly burnt all Sertorius's papers, unperused by himself, or suffered to be seen by others."

Some take this verse to speak of those, who willingly lend their ears to informers and detractors; who will bring them what is said abroad, whether true or false. And therefore, saith Solomon, since there is no man but who offends sometimes, not thou thyself excepted, do not hearken unto those who reckon up other men's faults; lest thou hear thy own, from those that are of thy family. Thus Maldonate.

[s] Ver. 23. Here he seems to resume his discourse, in the beginning of the book, concerning the shortness of hu-

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man understanding; and the difficulty of finding the truth and the reason of things. But no account can be given, why he thus starts from his subject, on a sudden, without any coherence. And therefore I have endeavoured to give another account of this and the following verse: which I have so interpreted, that they may be knit to the foregoing. I cannot say that herein I have followed any guide but my own judgment: which led me to think this to be a continued discourse. But they that dislike my connexion, must rest satisfied (as far as I can see) with that of Corranus (which hath more colour for it than any other), who takes this verse to be a preface to what the wise man had to add concerning the subtle arts of women to draw men in, if they be not exceeding cautious. Their wits being so versatile, their cunning so sly, and their allurements so many, that he professes he found them inexplicable; though he had spared no pains to penetrate into them. This he makes the sense of ver. 23—25.

[*t*] Ver. 26. And then, in this verse, Solomon gives an account of the danger they are in who suffer themselves to be ensnared by the arts of naughty women (who are so numerous, that he advises him, who would be good, to be very cautious how he enters into familiarity with that sex), who have brought sore calamities upon the greatest men; such as Samson, David, and Paris, and many other besides Solomon himself. The next verse I have made to relate to that.

The two words we translate *snares* and *nets* (to which he compares her *heart, i. e.* her invention, devices, &c.) both signify *nets*. Only the former signifies the nets of *hunters;* the latter, the nets, or *drags* rather, of *fishermen*, (Ezek. xxvi. 5.) as the LXX. distinguish them. The former, indeed, is applied also to *fishes*, in this book, (ix. 11.) and therefore the truer difference perhaps is, that the former signifies *finer*, the latter *coarser*, but stronger *nets:* such as cannot be broken, but will certainly destroy; as the root from whence *cherem* comes denotes. Both these words are in the plural number, to denote the vast multitudes that they catch, and the innumerable ways they have to entangle them, and hold them fast.

[*u*] Ver. 28. Gregory Thaumaturgus interprets this verse altogether of their chastity, after this manner: *I have found a chaste man, but never a chaste woman:* and, indeed, of that he is speaking, which makes this sense not unreasonable: though I have not so restrained it, nor do I think this is to be looked upon as the true character of women in general, in all ages and countries, but of such only as Solomon was acquainted withal; and of those in that and the neighbouring nations; especially of women there excelling in beauty, which commonly betrayed them to their ruin, and to the ruin of others; without an extraordinary grace to preserve them.

[*x*] Ver. 29. In the beginning of this verse (Melancthon thinks) Solomon speaks not of the first creation of man, but of the rule of men's actions; which God proposed to them: the sense being, as if he had said, *God instituted a good order how men should behave themselves in all things; but they contrive how to go beyond their bounds.* As David, for instance, had many wives of great beauty; but he would not be content without another man's. Antony had a great power, but he would be a monarch: which is the fault of many other great men.

This I have not altogether neglected; and also taken notice of De Dieu's interpretation of the last words of the verse, *Men sought out the thoughts of the great or mighty:* taking *rabbim* for *magnates;* that is, not contented with his own condition, *he affected to be like the angels, nay, like God.*

Maimonides refers it to the evils and miseries man draws upon himself here in this world; understanding by *chesch-bonoth (inventions)* man's foolish reasonings, whereby he precipitates himself into all the evils he endures. "For he thinks he wants this and that, when he doth not: and he thinks this and the other thing make him miserable which have no hand in it. But we may say, as Malachi doth, (i. 9.) *This hath been by means of your ownselves;* and as the wise man elsewhere, (Prov. xix. 3.) *The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*" (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 12.)

The common editions of the LXX. may be corrected out of Epiphanius, Hæres. xlix. who quotes this verse thus—Θεὸς συνετὸν ἄνθρωπον (in the common editions, even in the Polyglott Bible, it is σὺν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, most absurdly) ἐποίησε εὐθῆ· αὐτοὶ δε ἐζήτησαν πολλὰς ἑαυτοῖς ὁδούς. According to which I have, partly, framed my Paraphrase, taking συνετὸν to refer to the understanding, and εὐθῆ to the will: but I have attended also to the common reading in the latter end of the verse, which is not ὁδούς, but λογισμούς.

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter the wise man pursues the design of the former. Wherein he having given several advices, as a proper remedy for the vanity and trouble we find in all things (the principal of which are *seriousness, mindfulness of our mortality, integrity, meekness, patience, prudence),* in not exasperating men when we can avoid it *(caution in conversation with women),* he now adds several other of no less moment; which have respect not only to private, but also to public persons. And they amount to this (that I may give as short a summary as I can of the chapter), to shew how happy we all should be, if both subjects and princes also would be advised and considerate. But if they be not, good men should make themselves less miserable, by not being either too much disturbed at it, or giving any public disturbance; much less by disbelieving Providence, though they do not see the world governed as they would have it, to the encouragement of the good, and the punishment of the bad: but to enjoy what they can honestly, in the present condition wherein they are: and be contented and submit to the Divine government (though we do not understand it) when any alteration comes; and not add this affliction unto all the rest, anxiously to inquire into those things of which we are not able to give an account.

Ver. 1. *WHO is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.*] There is no man so happy, as he that is wise enough to understand, and to live by these rules: but let that man remember also, that as true wisdom gives the greatest comfort, confidence, and courage, to himself, so it is apt to

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make him kind and gentle unto others; and therefore let no man pretend unto it, unless it dispose him unto such virtues: for the deeper insight he hath into men, and business, and things, and the better able he is to solve all doubts and difficult cases, and thereby satisfy both himself and other men; the more friendly, courteous, and affable should he be to all; and the more humble, meek, and gentle also: which is far more majestical, and will gain him greater reverence, than austerity, surliness, and pride. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *I counsel thee to take the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.*] And let no man think I have respect merely to myself in what follows, because I am a king; but look upon this as a principal point of wisdom, both for his own and the public safety; to live in dutiful obedience to the king's edicts and commands, which do not thwart the laws of God: and that not merely for fear of his displeasure, and the penalty of the law, if it be broken or neglected, but out of respect to God, whose minister he is, and whom his subjects called to witness unto the sincerity of their hearts, when they swore true faith and allegiance to him. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.*] Let not thy passion transport thee to shew the least disrespect to him, much less to refuse his commands unmannerly, or to do any thing that may throw thee out of his favour; but if thou hast offended him, let thy next care be not to persist obstinately in the error, but to humble thyself and beg his pardon: not imagining thou canst flee so fast from his anger that it shall not reach thee; for his power is so large, that it will, one time or other, lay hold on thee and punish thee. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*] For the king's commands are backed with power; so that if he give sentence against thee, his officers are ready to do execution immediately; never examining whether it be right or wrong, but holding themselves obliged to do as he bids them. And, indeed, who may question him, or call him to an account, that hath no superior? Or who can control him that hath the power of the kingdom in his hands? See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth the commandments shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.*] Therefore, not only for conscience' sake, but for thy own safety and security, yield obedience to the king's commandment; for so thou shalt avoid the trouble both of thy mind and of thy body: and if thou pretendest to wisdom, shew it, not in opposing him and contending with him, but in a prudent declining what thou canst not honestly do; and in observing and taking the fittest season, and in the most inoffensive and winning manner, to insinuate good advice, when the king commits an error. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Because to every purpose there is time and judgment; therefore the misery of man is great upon him.*] For want of which sort of prudence men suffer very much: because there is a certain season for, and a certain manner of, doing every thing; which if it be not understood (and it requires no small pains to be able to discern it), or not embraced, it is not only impossible to be done, but many and great inconveniences ensue upon that oversight, or neglect. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?*] For no man can be sure that the like opportunity will return again: future things being so much in the dark, that neither he nor any one else can inform him what shall be hereafter; or when that will come, which in the course of things may probably be expected. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*] But let no prince, though never so great, presume hereupon to abuse his power to tyranny, because he hath no superior to control him: but remember these things following. First, that though he command over men's bodies, yet he hath no dominion over their minds and spirits; nor can he hinder them from thinking what they please, no more than he can the wind from blowing where it listeth: and next, that he cannot command them long; for death will come, and irresistibly seize on him, as well as on the meanest man: nay, he cannot rule the chances of war, nor promise himself certain victory in the day of battle: or, if he have had a great while good success, yet neither his policy, nor his power, shall be able always to defend him from the vengeance that will be taken, of the injustice, cruelty, and impiety, which he exercises in his government. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.*] There is no reason, therefore, to be so much as ambitious of great power; for in the view I have taken of all manner of things in this world, which I have weighed also, and considered daily, I have observed that sometimes unlimited power breaks itself in pieces, and the dominion to which a man is promoted ends in his own ruin, as well as theirs whom he pillages and tyrannically governs. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This is also vanity.*] And, among other things, I also observed such wicked men carried to their graves, who had been honoured as gods while they lived, because they were God's ministers, and sat in the judgment-seat, in that very place where he himself is present; but were no sooner gone, but they were forgotten, in that very city where they had enjoyed such high authority: so vain is the pomp wherein great men live, and wherein they are buried; which vanishes together with them, and, if they were not good in their place, is no more remembered. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*] But these observations move not vain men, who look no farther than their present prosperity. For though God hath pronounced a dreadful doom against all wicked men, and especially those that abuse their power unto tyranny over others; yet, because execution is not presently done upon them, but they live in all earthly splendour, both they and others also, by their example, grow more audaciously presumptuous in their wickedness; and think of nothing but doing mischief, by rapine, and all manner of iniquity in the world. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and*

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his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.] Not considering or believing this, which I am assured, as an undoubted truth, that though such a powerful sinner commit innumerable spoils upon his poor subjects, and no harm befal him a long time, yet, as God will make those good men an amends, whose reverence to his majesty makes them choose rather to suffer than to sin; and, notwithstanding all their oppressions, maintain their integrity, and continue in awful obedience unto him, and unto their governor: See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 13. *But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.*] So he will take a time to punish that impious tyrant, because he despises God and his providence, and fears not this Divine vengeance: nor are we without examples of such men, who have hastened their own ruin; and, by their violence, shortened their reign; and vanished away suddenly, like a shadow.

Ver. 14. *There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said, that this also is vanity.*] Such examples, indeed, do not deter them from wickedness, because they see instances on the other side (which is an afflicting consideration), that virtuous men sometimes fall into such miseries, as the wicked rather deserve to suffer; and, on the contrary, those impious men enjoy all the prosperity which, one would think, belongs only to the righteous: this, I have acknowledged already, is the lamentable condition of things, and a great part of the trouble of this world; to which I have given the best satisfaction I could, iii. 17. v. 8. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 15. *Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun.*] And must again commend that advice wherewith I concluded one of these discourses, (iii. 22.) that this ought neither to discourage a man in virtuous proceedings, nor make him careful and solicitous about events; but only move him, in the fear of God, (of which I just now spake, ver. 11.) to be merry whilst he may: for there is nothing better, than soberly and freely to enjoy the present good things, which the bounty of God bestows upon us; with thankfulness to him, and charity to others: for when a man, by his pains and labour, hath gotten a great estate, this is all that he can call his; God having only sent him what he hath for his present use, while he tarries here in this life; and then he must resign it unto others, and give an account how he hath used it unto him. See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 16. *When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes.)*] In this therefore rest satisfied, and do not trouble thyself with curious inquiries, why things are administered with such inequality, as is beforementioned: for I have travelled, as much as any body, in that disquisition, and, with great application of mind, have made a most diligent search into the causes and reasons of the whole management of affairs here in this world (my mind being one of those, that are as eager and greedy of knowledge, as others are of riches; for which they toil all day, and take little rest in the night): See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 17. *Then I beheld all the works of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet he shall not be able to find it.*] But this was all the satisfaction at which I could arrive, That the providence of God, without all doubt, governs every thing in this world; but why he suffers the wicked to prosper, and the virtuous to be oppressed by them; why he doth sometime speedily cut off a wicked tyrant, and sometime defer the execution so long, that he lives to do a world of mischief, and yet goes, perhaps, to his grave in peace; (ver. 10.) it is impossible to give a full account: for there is little or nothing that any man can know of the secrets of his counsels, or indeed of any other of his works; which are inscrutable by us, though a man take never so much pains to find them out; nay, though the wisest man in the world make it his constant business, he will be still forced to confess his ignorance; and the height of his knowledge will be to know, that God's ways are past finding out.

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. To the advices he had given in the foregoing chapter, he now adds some new ones: the first of which is this; that *the wisdom which will make us happy in this world must not make us morose and supercilious, severe and rigorous; but kind and benign, gentle and easy.* And the more we know, the more humble we ought to be: and by the very cheerfulness and pleasantness of our countenance invite others to us; and not by our frowning forbid them, or make them afraid, to approach us.

This I take to be the meaning of the first verse; in my Paraphrase upon which I have had respect to several acceptations of the several words, which it will be too long here to give an account of. They that will consult interpreters will find how they vary; and therefore I shall only mention the exposition of Melancthon upon the latter part of the verse (which is not commonly known), which, following the LXX. he thus translates: *Wisdom is the light of a man's countenance; but a pertinacious* (or impudent, obstinate) *person is worthy of hatred.* Which he explains in this manner, That wisdom, which can judge aright, when severity is profitable, or when lenity will do best; when it is fit to make war, when to be quiet; brings a man great gladness; but a pertinacious person, who is stiff and obstinate in his opinion, and will not hearken to those that give him good counsel, but follows the motions of his own anger, and obeys his passions, destroys himself and others. As the pertinacious humour, for instance, of Pericles and Demosthenes was most pernicious unto all Greece.

[*b*] Ver. 2. This pertinacious humour shews itself oftimes in opposing the sovereign authority: whereby men create to themselves and others great trouble in this world. And therefore Solomon advises men, in the next place (desiring them not to dislike the counsel, because the king gives it), to live in dutiful subjection to their prince; as a singular means of leading a happy life. For it is hard to say, whether the prudence and justice of a sovereign, in

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ruling well, or the humble and peaceable spirit of the people in complying with the established orders, contribute most to the public welfare. Certain it is, that it is much safer and easier (as well as more honest) to submit and be quiet, than to contend and unsettle the peace of kingdoms; though princes do not govern as they ought.

Melancthon makes this verse to contain two precepts (as the LXX. also seem to do), in this manner: *Observe the commandment of the king; and the word of the oath of God.* A sentence, saith he, exceeding worthy of consideration and remembrance: in which he commands us to observe the command of the king; but with this restriction, that we observe the law of God, and do nothing contrary unto that. For he calls the law the *oath of God;* because God made the sanction of it, in promises and threatenings with an oath. But this interpretation wholly neglects one word in the Hebrew, viz. *al:* and it draws both *dibrath* and *shebuath elohim,* from their ordinary and usual sense, to a meaning that is forced and strained. For which reason another exposition is not natural; which makes this indeed one precept, but instead of taking the latter part of it for an *obligation* to observe it, turns it into a *restriction* of it; in this manner: *Keep the king's commandment, but according to the oath of God;* that is, as far as religion and the faith we owe to the great Lord of all will suffer.

This is true, but not the true sense of the Hebrew word for *oath;* which some would have relate to the covenant made with God in circumcision; which is still farther off from the business than the notion which Melancthon had of it. Our translation is the plainest and most literal; Be obedient to the king, *and that in regard* (or because of the matter) *of the oath,* to which God is a witness, and a severe revenger of the breach of it. From which a moderate interpreter doth not much vary: whose words it will not be unprofitable to set down in this place, which run thus in English: "*Regard the king's mouth,* i. e. do whatsoever comes out of his mouth; whatsoever he commandeth and appointeth, out of that authority which he hath by Divine ordinance: *and chiefly the intention of the oath of God* (so he translates the latter part of the verse), that is, the oath whereby every one citeth God as his witness and judge, that with a good conscience he will obey the king; because God hath so commanded." Thus Joh. Coch. Which *oath* is either *tacit,* the very being in the condition of a subject carrying with it (as the late primate of Armagh speaks), by implication, a *silent* oath of fidelity and due obedience; or *express,* in the direct form of an oath, which princes have, for their better security, been wont to exact of their subjects. This is an ancient form, still remaining in Vegetius, of the oath wherein the soldiery bound themselves to the Christian emperors: *By God, and by Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, and by the majesty of the emperor, which, next after God, was to be loved and honoured,* lib. ii. cap. 5. where he adds this remarkable reason for it; because to him, when he hath received the name of Augustus, faithful devotion is to be performed, and all vigilant service paid, *as unto a present and corporeal God.* The violation of which oath, though made to a heathen prince, how heinously God takes, even as a despising of an oath made to himself, and a breach of his own covenant, those terrible threats do sufficiently demonstrate (Ezek. xvii. 12—14, &c.) which are denounced against Zedekiah, who rebelled against the king of Babylon, *who had made him swear by God,* (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.)

Some of the pharisees were the first that we read of who would not take this oath of allegiance: but, (as Josephus tells us, lib. xvii. Antiq. cap. 3.) boasting themselves to be the most exact observers of the law of God, and therefore the most in his favour (while they were full of inward pride, arrogance, and fraud), dared openly to oppose kings, and presumed by their motions to raise war against them, and annoy them: refusing, saith he, to take the oath, when all the Jews had sworn to be faithful to Cæsar. Of this sect, he adds, there were above six thousand: who were so far from lessening their crime by this refusal, and making what they did against his authority to be no rebellion; that it heightened it very much, and was in itself a piece of rebellion: they having a natural allegiance unto him, by being born his subjects.

There are some who, from the beginning of this verse, argue this book not to be Solomon's: because he saith of himself, *I observe the mouth* (*i. e.* commandment) *of the king.* So they translate the first words: which the LXX. translate as we do; and so do the Chaldee, the Syriac, and Arabic interpreters. For though the Hebrew word be אֲנִי *ego, I;* it signifies nothing to this purpose; because he doth not say, *I observe,* but simply *I; do thou* observe. There being a distinct note אֲנִי *I,* and what follows: shewing that it is a short form of speech, to be supplied by some such word as this, *I say,* or *I command,* or *counsel;* or rather *charge* thee. And the reason, perhaps, why the principal verb was omitted, might be (as the learned primate of Ireland, Usher, conjectures) because no word could be found significative enough to express the deepness of the charge.

Some may think that I have dilated too much upon this verse: but they may be pleased to consider how useful, if not necessary, it is at this time, when men begin again to plead the lawfulness of resistance. Which is so plainly condemned in this place, that the most learned assertors of the *old cause* were extremely puzzled to make it agree with their principles in the late times of rebellion. There is one who (in his book called Nature's Dowry, chap. 21.) calls in the assistance of a great many Hebrew doctors to help him to another translation of the words; and yet, after all, is forced to acknowledge that our English is right enough: and is content to admit it, with this proviso, that *the king manage well the affairs of the commonwealth.* As much as to say, do what they would have him.

[c] Ver. 3. The first word in this verse is capable of several senses, which I have endeavoured to express in the Paraphrase. For it originally signifies such a passion and perturbation (particularly that of *anger* and *terror*), as makes a man *precipitant* in his motions: being transported sometimes by σπεύδω, and sometimes by ταράττω, in the LXX. and the meaning of the wise man is, that, in pursuance of the foregoing counsel, (ver. 2.) we must take care, if we desire to live happily, to suppress our passions, and not to shew the least discontent with the government: especially, not hastily and rashly to fling ourselves (as we speak), in a fume, out of the king's presence, on any occasion: much less receive his commands with impatience; or, which is worst of all, incur his just displeasure by sullen disobedience. For though we may think to escape the effects of it, we shall find ourselves deceived: princes

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having long arms (as the phrase is) to reach those that offend them; though they flee never so far from them. This is the sense of ver. 3.

[*d*] Ver. 4. And it is farther enlarged in this verse: where Symmachus translates the first words thus: διὰ τὸν λόγον βασιλέως ἐξουσιαστικὸν εἶναι, *for the command of the king is authoritative;* carries such authority with it, that it will be executed. For the word *shillon* (from whence learned men have not unfitly derived the titles of *sultan* and *soldan*) denotes such a *power* as overpowers, and cannot be resisted: like that of death, (ver. 8.) to which all must submit.

And so it follows, in the end of this verse, *Who may say unto him, What doest thou?* i. e. first, Who hath any authority to call him to an account? as much as to say, None hath, but God alone. According to that of an eminent rabbi (quoted by the forenamed primate in the entrance of his book about Obedience), *No creature may judge the king, but the holy and blessed God alone.* To allow the people (either collective or representative) to have power to do it, is to make them *accusers, judges,* and *executioners,* also, in their own cause; and that against their sovereign. Nor, secondly, can any man safely attempt it; but he shall meet with punishment either here or hereafter. Which is no new doctrine, but the same with that of St. Paul (as Luther here honestly notes), *they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation:* which none shall be able to avoid. *Therefore it is safe simply to obey magistrates.* Which he repeats again upon ver. 7. *A man cannot do better than simply to obey.* So preachers, saith he, should exhort the tumultuous and seditious. *For judgment, vengeance, or punishment, is ordained and decreed by God, to all the disobedient, which none shall escape.* And thus much the author of Nature's Dowry is forced to acknowledge from the evident light he saw in this place; *that the scope of the words is, that, as we tender our own safety, we ought not to withstand the magistrate in his edicts, which are consonant to the word of God.* And it is *wisdom,* saith he (out of Elisha Gallico, a Hebrew interpreter), *in a private man, when the magistrate enjoins what is repugnant to God's will, to remove out of his dominions, rather than contest with him.* Which some conceive to be imported by the word *telec (go out,* or *go away),* in the foregoing verse.

[*e*] Ver. 5. From whence he again concludes it is the most prudent course, as well as most honest, to comply with those that have authority over us, in a dutiful obedience, or humble submission. So I have expounded the word *commandment,* for the commandment of the king beforementioned. Which, if we do not oppose, it is the way to preserve us from *knowing sorrow;* as we speak, very agreeably to the Hebrew phrase in this place; if by *evil thing* we understand the evil of punishment, rather than of sin. Many, indeed, by *commandment,* understand the precepts of God; which if we keep, we shall not fall into any evil practices; particularly, not into rebellion. Which is a good sense, and the reader may follow which he pleases; for the latter part of the verse will agree with either. Wherein he suggests that the wisest thing we can do, when princes require any thing grievous unto us, is, not to rebel, but to watch the fittest opportunities to petition for redress; and that after such a manner as may not give offence: so I have expounded *time* and *judgment,* in this and in the next verse.

[*f*] Ver. 6. For the truth is, a great part of the happiness of our life depends upon our discretion in observing and choosing the fittest opportunity for every thing, and the right manner of doing it. Especially when we have to do with kings, and great persons: concerning whom the wise man may still be thought to speak; both in this and the following verse.

[*g*] Ver. 7. If the Hebrew reading would bear it, the Vulgar translation (which the Syriac follows) of this verse, hath given an excellent reason, why a man is at such a loss to discern what is fit for him to do upon all occasions (especially how to direct his behaviour towards kings), *Because he knows little of what is past; and less, or rather nothing, of what is future.* For prudence consists in the remembrance of things *past,* consideration of things *present,* and foresight of things likely to *come hereafter.*

Luther refers it wholly to the miserable condition of a rebel, in this manner: "He desires various things, and hopes for mighty matters by his disobedience, but is lamentably deceived. For of the very impunity which he promised himself, he cannot be secure; but in an hour when he thinks not of it, judgment overtakes him, and he perishes in his disobedience. In short, the wicked contemns present obedience, and minds not future punishment. The wise man acts quite otherways; and remembering what mischiefs attend upon the rebellious, is studious therefore to be obedient."

[*h*] Ver. 8. Hence he takes occasion to give some good advice to princes themselves (which seems to me the plainest sense of this verse), not to abuse their power, because none can withstand them, or so much as question them: but to remember how weak they are upon many accounts; and therefore ought to be moderate in their government, if they intend to live happy. For otherwise they must expect their people's hatred; which they cannot hinder, no more than they can death, which is not in their power to resist. And if they be engaged in war, they will find their subjects assist them so coldly, that it may endanger the loss of their crown. So that clause may be understood, which we translate, *there is no discharge in war* (the word *that* being not in the original); that is, it will be too late then to discharge their subjects from the heavy burdens whereby they have oppressed them, when they have need of their service against an enemy. Or, as I have expressed it in the Paraphrase, they cannot command what success they please in war; but the event will be dubious: taking the word *mislachat* for a *dart,* a *javelin,* or such-like *weapon;* which we cannot direct and guide in that confusion, so as certainly to hit the mark at which it is thrown. So the Targum translates it, *Nor do the instruments of arms profit.* Or we may take it for a *commission* to raise forces (it being but once more used in the Bible, Psal. lxxviii. 49. and there the *mislachat* of evil angels, seems to be a company of angels, sent with a commission to do the execution there mentioned), which is too late to issue in the day of battle, if he be beaten: or, if he be not, yet let him not flatter himself (which is the true sense of the last clause of the verse), as if he should always escape; for the Divine justice will one day lay hold on him and punish him.

Thus, with reference to princes, the LXX. seem to understand this verse: who having said, ver. 4. βασιλεὺς

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ἐξουσιάζων, *the king commands with authority,* thus translate the first words of this, οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ἐξουσιάζων ἐν πνεύματι, but *no man* (no, not the king himself) *hath authority in all things; for example, not over the spirit of man.* But this verse also may be expounded (as some interpreters understand it) to be a continuance of the foregoing discourse, in this manner; That no man can bridle the wrath of the prince (by *spirit* understanding *anger*), or hinder the eruption of it. And it is in vain also for men to seek to save themselves from the sentence of death which he hath pronounced against them: for if they should wage war with him, it is not likely they would overcome or escape in the day of battle: or, if they did, they would meet sometime or other with a just punishment for their rebellion. Which is the meaning of the last clause (if the words be thus taken); *wickedness* (that is, *rebellion*) *shall not deliver those that are the authors of it.*

[*i*] Ver. 9. This and the following verse agree very well with that exposition which refers (ver. 8.) to princes: who sometimes are advanced to rule over others, to their *own hurt.* So we translate the last words of this verse; which Luther (who is not alone in that opinion) will have still to belong to *subjects,* over whom a prince is sometimes placed to be a scourge unto them. Notwithstanding which, saith he, the king's commandment is to be observed, and sedition not to be moved. Which he repeats again (so full he was of this doctrine): The wise man here grants, that there may be evil governors to punish their subjects; and yet these also are to be tolerated.

[*k*] Ver. 10. This verse I have taken wholly to belong to *wicked rulers;* because all the ancient translations do so, as well as our English. Though most of the modern interpreters will have the first part of the verse to refer unto wicked governors, and the latter part unto good; whose memory is abolished, when the other (so bad is mankind) are extolled and honoured: for which I see no reason, but look upon it as contrary to the design of the wise man, in this place, and therefore I have rejected it.

The place of the holy] May be expounded divers ways; but it seems to me most natural to take it for a *periphrase* of the place of judgment, (mentioned iii. 16.) in which the judges sustained the person of God, who was in their assembly, and judged in the midst of them. (Psal. lxxxi. 1.) Whence the judgment-seat was called the *place of the Holy, i.e.* of God, the *Holy One of Israel:* whom the Jews now constantly call by the name of *the Holy, that most Blessed One.* St. Jerome understands it of the *temple* (but then it must be translated, not the *place of the holy,* but the *holy place,* which is not agreeable to the Hebrew), and expounds the words thus, *The wicked buried, who were esteemed saints in the earth; and while they were thought worthy princes in the church, and in the temple of God.* I have sometimes thought that the words might, according to this sense of the *holy place,* be thus word for word rendered out of the Hebrew (if the grammarians will permit *holy* here not to be a substantive), *I saw the wicked buried, and they* (that is, such as attend their funeral) *came, and even out of the holy place followed;* that is, the very priests waited on the hearse to do them the greater honour. Or thus, *The funeral pomp reached from the very temple to the place of burial.*

[*l*] Ver. 11. From hence he takes occasion to shew what is the very root of men's malicious and incurable wickedness. And the first thing to which he ascribes it is, their thriving a long time in evil courses, which makes them hope this prosperity will continue to the end of their days. And if they can but live splendidly, they care not what becomes of them when they die. Now though there be a *pithgam,* a *decree,* a *definitive sentence* (as the word signifies), passed against them; yet nothing being done upon it, so soon as we expect, it both hardens the heart of those sinners, and mightily discourages better men; who hereupon grow angry, or flag in their duty: to both which Luther would have what follows referred.

But it properly belongs to the evil-doers, who, upon the suspense of the judgment passed upon them, sin on with great confidence; and have nothing else in their thoughts but malicious contrivances. Both which may be denoted by this phrase, *Their heart is filled in them* to do evil.

[*m*] Ver. 12, 13. Yet this is not to be understood, he here shews, without exception; but sometimes the Divine justice proceeds to quick execution. Which is a thing noted by the heathens themselves, that God cuts tyrants short; and suffers them not to ravage so long, as they hope to do. And thence they exhort them to moderation; according to that of Stesichorus, quoted by Aristotle in his Rhetorics (as Melancthon here observes), "Do not injure any man, for the very grasshoppers will chirp it in the fields." That is, the poor, who are oppressed, send out their complaints, and move God to punish such tyrants.

[*n*] Ver. 14. Here he discovers the other root of men's incurable wickedness; *viz.* the examples they see of those who live virtuously, and yet live miserably. Which proves a great scandal to those who admire worldly things too much: and makes them angry, at least to behold how all was given heretofore, for instance, to wicked priests, and now godly ones have scarce bread to put into their mouths. They are the words of Luther, who observes, that soldiers have better pay than many of Christ's ministers; who are to lead his people, and conduct them unto heaven.

[*o*] Ver. 15. Notwithstanding which, the wise man advises him that would live as happily as the state of things here will permit, not to grow sullen at this, (ver. 15.) much less to doubt of God's good providence; nor to be disturbed, though we are not able to give a reason, why virtuous men suffer very much, when the wicked at the same time escape. Which I take to be the meaning of the two last verses; which I have referred to our ignorance of this particular matter; as St. Jerome also doth, whose words are these: "He that seeks the causes and reasons of things, why this or that is done, and why the world is governed by various events; why one man is blind and lame, and another is born with eyes and sound; one is poor, and another is rich; this man is noble, that inglorious: he gets nothing by his inquiry, but only this; to be tormented in his own questions, and to have his disputations instead of a rack, and yet not find what he sought."

That word in the Hebrew which we translate *because though,* is found only in this place; but from Josh. i. 7. (where it is found in composition) the doctors conclude it signifies, *for that,* or *because of;* and so the meaning here is, that a man shall not be able by all the labour and pains he can take, not though he be a wise man that is thus laborious, to discover the reasons of things, and give an ac-

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count of the difference which he observes in the Divine dispensations.

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter begins where the foregoing ends; the wise man proceeding still to justify what he had observed, about the most puzzling question in the world: *Why the good and bad fare all alike, without any constant visible distinction?* His resolution, cautions, remedies, about this matter, appear so plainly in the Paraphrase and Annotations which I shall annex to it, that I will give no large account here of this chapter; but only note, that the sum of it is this: that the confusion of things here below should not move us to discontent, much less incline us to irreligion; but rather dispose us, with thankfulness and sobriety, to enjoy freely that portion of good things, while we have them, which God hath given us. Neither slacking our diligence, nor trusting to it alone; but depending on God's wise providence, which, notwithstanding that seeming confusion, governs all events: disappointing many times the most likely and applauded means; and again, succeeding the most unlikely and contemptible. Which should move us to commend ourselves and concerns unto God; and then, above all things, to value and study true wisdom and prudence in the management of all affairs; as far excelling mere power, of which we are foolishly ambitious.

Ver. 1. *FOR all this I considered in my heart, even to declare all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.*] This is no rash assertion, for I, Solomon, affirm again, (viii. 16.) I have deeply considered all that belongs to this matter with earnest desire and endeavour to give a clearer account, and fuller resolution of it, than this, which is all I can say: that though good men and prudent are under the care of God (which must satisfy them in all events), by whose special providence, both they and their undertakings and affairs are approved, directed, governed, and defended; yet (such a secret there is in it) they prove sometimes so unsuccessful, that no man can know by any thing that befals him, or others, how God stands affected towards them; but will conclude very falsely, if he judge that God loves him who hath all that his heart desires; or that he hates him, who is sorely afflicted. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*] For there is no certain and constant distinction made between one man and another, in the distribution of things in this world; but they all fare alike, especially in public calamities: a righteous man, for instance, perishes in a battle as well as the wicked; he that keeps himself pure and undefiled dies in a pestilence, as well as the filthy and unclean; he that worshippeth God in sincerity and truth suffers by storms, shipwrecks, and inundations, &c. as well as a profane person or a hypocrite; and, on the contrary, a blasphemer of God, nay, a perjured wretch, prospers and thrives, as much as he that dreads the holy name of God, and dares not rashly, much less falsely, take it into his mouth. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *There is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*] This (it must be acknowledged) is one of the most grievous things in this lower world, that all things being thus blended together without any distinction, some draw from thence this lewd and wild conclusion, that there is no difference between virtue and wickedness: and therefore take the greatest licence to do evil confidently and boldly all their life long: pursuing their own lusts and passions so furiously, that they hasten their end; and death, which spares nobody (but is the most common of all other things), seizes on them before they think of it. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.*] But who would choose to be a companion of these mad men, who run themselves so fast out of all hope? which still remains (in the midst of all our changes here) as long as a man remains in the number of the living; but is lost when he is dead: in which respect the meanest and most contemptible person here in this world, hath the advantage of the greatest king, when he is gone out of it. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 5. *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*] For while men live and are well, they have sense and relish of such things as they possess; and, knowing they must die, are taught thereby to use them with a sober freedom: because when they are gone from hence they become perfect strangers to all things here, and can no longer enjoy any benefit of their labours; (iv. 9.) the fruit of which falls into the hands of other men, who never so much as think what is become of them.

Ver. 6. *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.*] Nor doth it then signify any thing, whether a man was loved, or hated, or envied by them; but all these passions are so extinguished with them, that nobody courts their favour, nor fears their ill-will or displeasure: for, though they have been never so powerful, they have nothing more to do with us here in this world; nor can we, if we would, transmit any of our enjoyments to them, in the place where they are.

Ver. 7. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.*] And, therefore, shaking off both all anxious cares, and also all perplexing thoughts about God's providence, (ver. 1.) excite thyself, by the remembrance of death, to a cheerful enjoyment of those good things present which thou justly possessest: use them while thou hast them, with a well-pleased, contented, nay, joyful mind; believing, if thou hast approved thyself to God in the rest of thy works, it is very acceptable to him, that thou shouldest thus rejoice in his love; who hath made all things here for the service of man, and blessed thee with a comfortable portion of them. See Annot. [*d*]

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Ver. 8. *Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.*] For which reason, do not live either sordidly or sadly; but, at all seasonable times, entertain thyself and thy friends liberally, with such pleasures as may recreate and refresh thy spirits, after thy honest labours: for innocent mirth, suitable to thy condition, is as becoming those that are good, as the filthy delights of men lewdly voluptuous are abominable. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 9. *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.*] Flee therefore adultery and fornication, but solace thyself exceedingly with thy own wife; and, loving her with the most tender and constant affection, take all the comfort her society can afford: for it is the greatest God hath provided for mankind in this troublesome life; and therefore both seek for such a one as thou canst love; and, when thou hast her, delight thyself in her company, with such unalterable kindness, as may help to sweeten the afflictions to which we are subject in this world: for thou canst reap no other fruit of all thy toil in this life, but to take an innocent pleasure, with tranquillity of mind, in such good things as those, which the providence of God bestows upon thee. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.*] In which, that thou mayest take the sincerest pleasure, let it not make thee slothful, much less dissolute; but dispose thee rather to be vigorously industrious, in doing all the good that is in thy power: for which end, lay hold on every occasion that presents itself, and improve it with the utmost diligence; because now is the time of action, both in the employments of the body and of the mind; now is the season of studying either arts or sciences, or wisdom and virtue; for which thou wilt have no opportunities in the place whither thou art going in the other world: which is designed for rest from our present labours, and for the reward of them. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 11. *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*] But do not presume merely on thy own industry, though never so great, for good success in thy undertakings, nor fancy that nothing shall interrupt thy pleasures, but look up unto God, and leave all to his providence: for (to return to what I said about events, ver. 1.) I have observed that they do not depend upon our will and pleasure, but upon his: we being apt to think, that he who, for instance, can run swiftest, will certainly carry away the prize; and that he who hath the greatest forces will win the victory in a battle; when it falls out quite otherwise, that both of them lose the day: and more than that, the wise and the learned in their profession cannot sometimes get their bread, but men of greatest reach are poor, and ingenious artists not at all regarded, or encouraged, according to their deserts; for there are certain seasons wherein, by various accidents which unexpectedly start up, all men's nimbleness, strength, valour, wit, cunning, and dexterity, prove ineffectual. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 12. *For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*] For no man can foresee many evils that befal him, no, not the time of his death, which surprises him unawares, when he thinks no more of it, than the silly fish or birds do of the net or the snare, wherein they are caught to their destruction: nay, as they are entangled, when they swim or fly securely, in hope to catch their prey; so do men perish by those counsels and actions, from whence they expected the greatest advantages; and are undone by some sudden and unavoidable mischief that seizes them, when they thought themselves at the top of their hopes. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 13. *This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me.*] But though events be not in our power, being overruled by a higher Providence, we ought not therefore to imagine there is no use of prudent counsel and forecast: for that sort of wisdom, which we call political, how mean soever it may seem in some men's eyes, is with me of greater price than wealth and riches. And this single observation shews that I have reason for it: See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 14. *There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.*] There was a city of small circuit, ill fortified, and manned by a very small garrison; against which a mighty king, with numerous forces, made his approaches: and, having intrenched his army, and drawn a strong line about it, and raised his batteries, doubted not to take it speedily, or to have it surrendered into his hands:

Ver. 15. *Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.*] When, by a strange providence of God, there unexpectedly appeared a wise man, but he so poor that nobody minded him, who saved the city from this imminent danger; and that not by money, for he had none; nor by arms, for the besiegers were far superior in strength; but merely by his wise counsels, contrivances, stratagems, and conduct, wherein he excelled the greatest warriors. And yet, O foul ingratitude! his citizens, who ought to have recorded his fame, and preserved it to all posterity, soon forgot their deliverer; and, because he was poor, regarded him after this memorable service he had done them, no more than they had done before. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 16. *Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*] Which notwithstanding ought not to discourage worthy men from serving their country; for wisdom and counsel, from such examples as this, will be preferred by all judicious and virtuous persons, as well as by me, before mere power and strength: because ungoverned forces destroy themselves, when a little force, under skilful conduct, achieveth the greatest things: and therefore it ought to be highly valued in the most obscure person, though the senseless multitude (as if wisdom borrowed all its credit from him that possesseth it) despise the counsel of a poor man; and ofttimes suffer this punishment of their folly and ingratitude, that, shutting their

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ears to his wholesome advice, they fall into many and great calamities. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 17. *The words of wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.*] An intolerable fault this is. For the modest speeches of the meanest wise man delivered gently, and without noise, are far more worthy to be heard; and, if they meet with a patient ear, and a serene mind, free from the tumult of pride and passion, will be more regarded, and prove more efficacious, than the most clamorous and imperious language of a powerful fool: as appears by what the poor man propounded for the saving of the city, which prevailed more in their distress, than the furious outcries of the greatest commander, swaggering among his troops of ignorant soldiers. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 18. *Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.*] I cannot therefore but again commend counsel and wise conduct, and prefer it before the greatest forces, and all manner of warlike preparation; for it sometimes saves whole armies, nay countries, from destruction, which have been utterly ruined by the rash boldness and forwardness, or other error, of some mighty man; who hath overthrown well-settled kingdoms and states, and brought them into many miseries: for it is a known thing, that many have been undone by the fault of one; as by one man's prudence many have been delivered. See Annot. [*o*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. Though Solomon had often, and thoroughly, considered that question, mentioned in the Argument of this chapter, yet he could come to no resolution about it but this, that it ought not to shake our belief of God's love to virtuous men (which is expressed in that phrase, *in the hand of God;* wherein are included all the effects of his kindness and care), and that we must not judge men to be good or bad, by what befals them in their outward estates. So those words are most naturally interpreted, *A man knoweth not love or hatred,* &c. which some, indeed, refer unto men, not unto God, in this sense: *No man knows certainly what is best for him in this world;* and consequently cannot tell what he should desire, and what deprecate, of all the things that are before him. For those things which he hates and is averse unto, may be as good for him as those which he loves, and wishes to enjoy. To this purpose Maldonate. Or thus, No man knows whether that which he loves, or that which he hates, shall befal him; but *all things are before them;* that is, are appointed how they shall be, antecedent to the will of men. Thus Aben Ezra. And there are those who interpret that phrase, *before them,* in this manner: *They see the good and evil which befals them, but cannot foresee it till it come upon them.* And some join both together thus, *Neither the favour nor disfavour of men, neither their approving or opposing what we do, is any certain mark that we are good or bad.*

But I have followed that sense which seemed to me most simple and most coherent with the rest of the words. As for that doctrine, which many great writers in the Roman church have built upon this text, that *no man can be certain whether he be in the favour of God or not, while he is in this life,* Melancthon truly calls it *interpretatio monachorum; the interpretation of the monks;* who distorted the words of Solomon, and writhed them to their own dotages. For it is madness, saith he in another place (in his treatise of good works), to say, that we know not whether murderers and adulterers are worthy of God's hatred.

[*b*] Ver. 2. For this next verse plainly shews, that he speaks of such notes of God's favour or hatred, as men are very desirous he would make; by putting a difference between good and bad men, in external things. Which he is not pleased to do: but they are sick, or lose their goods, their children, or friends, all alike. Which is more particularly true in public calamities, as St. Cyprian excellently discourses, both in his book to Demetrian, and in his book de Mortalitate. In the former of which he acknowledges, that good and bad men being in this world, as in one and the same house, whatsoever befals the house, must necessarily befal the inhabitants; who cannot be well, when the common air wherein they all breathe is infected; nor have a good crop, when there wants rain to make the earth fruitful. "Only herein (saith he to the pagans) we are not *compares et æquales vobis, alike and undistinguished from you:* that we do not grieve as you do, in these common calamities; we are not so impatient; nor make such outcries and complaints: but a courageous and religious patience quiets our mind, and makes us thankful to God. *Viget apud nos spei robur,* &c. *the strength of faith is vigorous among us; and the firmness of hope;* and a mind erect in the midst of the ruins of a decaying world; together with an immoveable virtue; a constantly joyful patience; and a soul always secure of her God. So that she may say with the prophet, (Habak. iii. 17, 18.) *Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither should fruit be in the vine,* &c. *yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*" The difference of the several expressions used here in this verse, for good men and bad, I have explained, as well as I could, in the Paraphrase. And they that would see examples of the same event to every one of the opposite persons, may look into the Hebrew commentators, or into Mercer, and there find them.

[*c*] Ver. 3. In this and the following verses, he shews the ill use men make of the foregoing observation; and their folly therein. For, imagining God loves all men alike, because they find the same things happen to them all, they run into such an excess of wickedness with such a frantic liberty, as brings them speedily to their graves: whereby they lose what they would have kept, and what they desired and hoped still to get. Thus I have interpreted ver. 4. in which there is exceeding great difficulty; both because of the various reading of one word, which we translate *joined to;* and the uncertainty whether Solomon here delivers his own opinion, or the opinion of the epicures; whom some think he here introduces, and making a speech which reaches to ver. 11. which is the sense of Greg. Thaumaturgus among the Greeks; and of several Latin writers, who herein follow some of the Hebrews: whose wise men say, (as we read in Maimonides's More Nevochim, par. ii. cap. 28.) *that some sought to smother the book of Ecclesiastes, because its words savour of heresy.* From which imputation that they might free it, they took such words as they thought looked that way, to be the sayings of carnal men. But there is no need to have recourse to this way of exposition (as St. Jerome acknowledges), which I have not followed, be-

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cause there seems to me to be an easy and plain sense of the words, in coherence with the foregoing. And in expressing of that sense, I have neglected neither the *writing*, nor the *reading*, as the Hebrews speak: but taken notice of the sense of the word we translate *joined to*, as it is in the text, and as it is in the margin of the Hebrew Bibles. There are many other ways of explaining it, and the whole verse; but I shall not trouble the reader with any of them, save only with Melancthon's (which I do not find taken notice of by any of the later interpreters), who translates the words thus: *What therefore is to be chosen? In one that is alive there is hope; and a living dog*, &c. In answer, saith he, to those who, being disturbed at the confusion of things, asked, *Must we then choose to labour, when we meet with no rewards?* Solomon replies, *By all means follow your calling, and commend events to God.* "There is hope while a man lives, that he may come to something; and, although thou canst not be a lion, yet be content to be a meaner creature, though it be but a little dog. Thou art not able to be such a captain as Scipio; yet thou mayest be like to Fabius. Why do we seek for *lions*, such heroical captains and governors as Gideon, Samson, and David? Let us use such as we have, who, though they be not like those lions, yet may be like small dogs. And let them do something in their places; and pray to God they may be vessels of mercy. In which consideration (saith he) Solomon stays long; saying, in the following verses, that the dead are gone from the government of this world; and therefore we must use those that are present, follow our calling, rest in God by faith and a good conscience, whatsoever the events be." As for those that fancy the wise man would here contradict himself in what he said, iv. 2, 3. unless we take these words for the opinion of other men, they may be easily answered; that both are true in different respects. There he speaks with respect to the *troubles* of life; and here with respect to the *advantages* of it: the chief of which is, hope of bettering our condition, when it is never so miserable. Which may be extended to the minds, as well as our outward concerns: there is hope men may live to see their follies, correct their mistakes, amend their lives, and recover the favour of God: which is irrecoverably lost when they are gone from hence. In short, he seems to say the same that the heathen meant in the fable of Pandora's box: in which *hope* alone remained, after every thing else that was good was flown away. And there are the like sayings in Theocritus and Euripides: which may be found in Erasmus's Adages, chil. ii. cent. iv. adag. 12.

[*d*] There is little difficulty in the following verses; where there are several passages which shew, that Solomon is not representing the sense of those who believe nothing after this life: but hath respect only to the state of men here in this world, as he saith expressly in the conclusion of ver. 6. And in the seventh verse plainly supposes the man to whom he directs his discourse to be religiously affected, and to govern himself in his pleasures with a regard to God, and the censure that he will pass upon his actions in another place: and thereupon advises him to a cheerful use of all manner of good things in this life.

[*e*] For I take *white garments* not to denote a magnificent and splendid way of living; but only a neat, clean, and pleasant (both *white garments* and *anointing the head* being opposite to the habits of mourners, which were sad and sordid), in which there can be no danger, if it do not hinder serious business; but rather be a refreshment after it, and a preparation to renew it, as it follows, ver. 10. The Essenes, as Josephus tells, (lib. ii. cap. 7. ἀλωϛ.) went in white, though they would not use any ointments, which seemed to him too voluptuous. The pleasure, indeed, of them was great, (as I shall shew upon Cant. i. 2.) and was by many abused, and made too expensive and costly: but not therefore to be refrained altogether by sober people; who forbare them in times of *mourning* (2 Sam. xiv. 2.) and *fasting*, (Matt. vi. 17.) but used them in feasts and in times of joy, (Psal. xlv. 7. xcii. 10. Luke vii. 37, &c.)

[*f*] Ver. 9. Here is a new proof, that this is not the speech of voluptuaries; for they love not to be confined to a wife; as Solomon here advises this happy man to be: making her his partner in all the joys and comforts he hath; as she will be in his grief and sorrows. The Hebrew phrase *see life*, or *lives*, in the plural number, is well translated by us *live joyfully* (or *very joyfully*), for *chajim* includes in it all the conveniences and pleasures of life, (Psal. xxxiv. 13.) and to *see* is to *enjoy*, as was noted before.

[*g*] Ver. 10. Here Gregory Thaumaturgus imagines the speech of the profane, atheistical crew concludes; and glosses in this manner upon it: Ταῦτα μὲν οἱ μάταιοι, ἐγὼ δὲ, &c. *Thus vain men talk, but I say unto you*, &c. (as it follows in the rest of the chapter.) Which is not at all agreeable, in my opinion, to the words of this verse; wherein there is a very serious advice to be diligent in all that we have to do in this world: which is not the way of sensual men, who love not to think of *work*, *contrivance* (or *thought*), *knowledge*, and *wisdom*. The difference between which words, I have expressed in the Paraphrase; and shall only add, that they seem to comprehend our whole business here in this world. For action is employed in some *work* or other; to which we must bend our *thought*, and devise how to do it; and for that end learn *sciences*, but especially study *wisdom* (unto which *sciences* are an entrance), that we may both accomplish what we design, and know how to use the fruit of our labour.

[*h*] Ver. 11. But after all that we can do, he advises to a faithful dependance upon God and his good providence: and not upon our own strength or wisdom. By which advice he reproves that old saying, "Faber quisque fortunæ suæ;" *Every man makes his own fortune:* "Which (as the Lord Bacon speaks, in a discourse touching helps to the intellectual powers) we ought to look upon as an insolent and unlucky saying: except it be uttered as a hortative or spur to correct sloth;" and (I may add) to excite us to watchfulness, in laying hold of all opportunities, and neglecting no occasions, of doing ourselves good. "For otherwise, if it be believed as it sounds, and a man enters into a high imagination that he can compass and fathom all accidents, and ascribes all successes to his own drift and reaches, and the contrary to his errors and sleepings, it is a profane speech; and it is commonly seen that the evening fortune of that man is not so prosperous, as of him that, without slacking his industry, attributeth much to felicity and providence above him."

Yet this is not the same doctrine with that neither which saith, "Vitam fortuna regit, non sapientia;" *Fortune, not wisdom, governs the life of man.* For, as Melancthon observes upon the conclusion of this book, there is much dif-

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ference between *philosophical* and *ecclesiastical* sayings. The *church*, in such sayings as this, confirms providence, and admonishes us to have God in our thoughts; whether events be answerable to our desires or not. But profane writers, in such sayings as that now mentioned, leave out Divine providence, and take no notice of it; but only of a blind power, which troubles all things that are wisely designed.

It is no impertinent inference which Corranus makes from these words, that all the things which the *swift*, the *valiant*, and the rest of the persons here mentioned seek, being their end, of which they frequently miss; it is an argument that the happiness of man consists not either in *fame*, or *victory*, or *eating* and *drinking*, or *riches*, or the *favour* of others; but in contentment with such things as we have, and God shall think good for us, in his wise providence.

[*i*] Ver. 12. Which hath given us many examples of men, who, incited by false persuasions and foolish hopes, dreamt of good events; when, in the midst of their course, they were oppressed with great calamities. Thus Melancthon glosses upon these words in ver. 12. and instances in Marius, Pompeius, and Julius Cæsar. Which he explains more largely in his Review of the first chapter of this book, a little before he died. "Where he observes how Cato and Marcellus were disappointed when they hoped for victory in a good cause: and Brutus and Cassius, when they hoped by the treacherous slaughter of Cæsar, to have restored the form of the old republic: and Antony, when he thought by oppressing Augustus to make himself monarch of the world. All which verifies the old saying (which he remembers in his notes upon the Proverbs), Μάταιοι μάταια λογίζονται, δι' ἐπιθυμίας. *Vain men are abused by their own desires, which lead them to make false accounts, and fill them with vain expectations.* And it teaches us the truth of those Divine sayings, *The way of man is not in himself. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*, &c. Examples of which we have in Saul, who hoped to have left the kingdom to his posterity: and in David himself, who thought once of having Absalom for his successor. But Solomon here teaches us to consider how infinitely the wise providence of God excels our greatest wit and cunning, and can more easily overreach all our counsels, and overturn all our well-laid designs, than we can outwit the silly birds and fishes."

[*k*] Ver. 13, 14. Which should not discourage wise and regular proceedings; but only make us refer ourselves unto God: who, as he thus disappoints the most probable hopes, so, at other times, makes men successful, when they have no hope at all. As Solomon here shews in the following observation, (ver. 13, 14.) Upon which St. Jerome glosses in this manner: "It hath been often seen, that a small city and few inhabitants, being beset by an army of innumerable enemies, and besieged so straitly, that they were in danger, if not otherways, to perish by famine; were on a sudden, contrary to all men's expectations, delivered by a mean person, who, having more wisdom than all the wealthy, great, powerful, and proud citizens, thought of a way to save them, when they gave themselves for lost; and effected that also of which they utterly despaired. And yet, O that ungrateful forgetfulness of mankind! after the siege was raised, after the liberty of their country was restored, there was nobody thought of this poor man, nobody gave him thanks for their safety: but all honoured the rich, who, in their danger, could do them no service."

[*l*] Ver. 15. Which sets forth, as the Lord Bacon observes on this verse, (lib. viii. de Augm. Scient. cap. 2. parab. 21.) "the depraved and malignant nature of mankind: who, in extremities and straits, commonly flee to men of wisdom and courage, whom before they despised: but so soon as the storm is over, they become unthankful wretches to their preservers. Machiavel, not without reason, propounds the question, Whether should be most grateful to well-deserving persons, the prince or the people? but in the mean time he taxed them both of ingratitude. Though this doth not arise merely from the ingratitude of the prince or the people alone; but there is added too oft to this the envy of the nobility: who in secret repine at the event, though happy and prosperous, because it proceeded not from themselves. For which cause they extenuate the merit of the act, and depress the author."

Thus Themistocles was served (as Luther here observes), who, having performed great things for his citizens, was basely requited by them. Nay, David himself was soon forgotten, who had been the greatest benefactor to Israel: ten of whose tribes soon renounced all dependance on his house, and fell off quite from their subjection to it. So that to do good to the world, saith he, is to throw away the benefits we bestow; or to cast gold into dung, and pearls before swine. And therefore it is best to enjoy what we have, and to mind our present business, casting away care for the future. For, as Phædria saith in Terence, "It is better my benefits should be lost, than I should be lost together with them." And not to be moved from our duty by the world's ingratitude, is an advice he often repeats, very profitable in this chapter: that we may be like our heavenly Father, who *doth good to the evil and to the unthankful.*

[*m*] Ver. 16. The beginning of this verse may be illustrated out of Dion Prusæus (Orat. ii. de Regno), who observes, that Agamemnon wished rather for ten such grave counsellors as Nestor, than so many valiant youths as Ajax and Achilles, ὡς ᾧττον ἂν ἁλούσης τῆς Τροίας. Where he shews also how great the power of oratory is to subdue men's minds.

[*n*] Ver. 17. Yet it must be added, that the best and safest counsels cannot be so much as heard or regarded, though never so wise, till people's straits have made them humble, sad, and serious; as Aben Ezra expounds this seventeenth verse: *The words of the wise are despised by the people, when they are in prosperity; but when they are in distress* (almost famished by such a siege as is beforementioned), *and silenced by fear and grief, then they listen greedily and diligently.* Which Melancthon expresses better; *The words of the wise are heard by the silent: i. e.* by such as do not rage with any desire; but seek the truth, and what is wholesome for them. This, and another obvious sense of the words, I have expressed in the Paraphrase; but have taken little notice of this, which seems not so near the meaning: that *it is better to hearken to wise men, who persuade to peace, than to tumultuous spirits, who incite silly people unto war. He that rules among fools*, is a Hebraism for a great fool: or we may understand it of

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one whose authority sways much among fools, or of a *foolish commander*. And St. Jerome expounds it of a *bawling orator*, or *preacher*. "Whatsoever declaimer (saith he) thou seest in the church, by the incitement and elegance of words exciting applauses, moving laughter, or stirring up the people to affections of joy: know that it is a sign of folly both in him that speaks, and in them that hear him: for the words of the wise are heard in quiet and moderate silence," &c.

[*o*] Ver. 18. All authors furnish us with abundance of examples of the truth of the last clause of the last verse: but I shall only briefly mention a little of Melancthon's gloss upon the place. There are vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy: the *vessels of wrath* are unhappy men, who bring destruction upon themselves and others, though sometimes they be great and wise persons: according to that of Solon, *Commonwealths are overturned by great and excellent wits*. Such were Ahaz, Zedekiah, Catiline, Antony, and others. And in the church, Samosatenus, Arius, Manichæus, and many other pernicious doctors. Of all which Solomon says, *One sinner destroys much good*, Πολλακὶ καὶ συμπᾶσα πόλις κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐπαυρεῖ. The *vessels of mercy* are such men, whose course is salutary to themselves and others: such a poor man in the city was Jeremiah; by whose counsels, if they had been followed, Jerusalem might have been saved from destruction. Let us therefore pray to God, with continual groans, that we may be vessels of mercy; and that he would preserve us from being the pests and furies (ἀλάστορες) of mankind: driving a violent course to our own and others' ruin.

CHAP. X.

ARGUMENT.

The sum of this chapter is, that as true wisdom and virtue is the only thing that can give us tranquillity: so that part of it which teaches us to govern our tongue, and to behave ourselves dutifully towards our governors (though they do not manage things to our content, nor to the general good), conduces more unto it, than men are willing to believe. For this is, in a manner, the scope of the whole chapter, to make every one sensible of the great blessing of government; especially of good government: and that therefore they ought to bear with all manner of grievance; as a less mischief than the want of government, by rebellion against it. Which begins in undutiful discourse: the folly and danger of which he admirably represents; with many other things tending to our present peace and settlement.

Ver. 1. *DEAD flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*] And the wiser or better any man is, so much the more cautious ought he to be, in all his words and actions; if he mean to preserve that credit, esteem, and authority in the world, which give him great advantages of doing good. For as dead flies, though very small creatures, falling into a pot of ointment, and bursting there, corrupt that precious composition, which the apothecary hath made with excellent art; so that it turns the perfume into a stink: in like manner doth a small error, or miscarriage, blemish him, who was highly valued for his discretion and virtue; and the least sordid action destroys his reputation, who was honoured for his noble way of living. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left.*] It is hard indeed to be thus circumspect; but herein a truly wise man's worth is discovered, that his judgment never fails him in the greatest difficulties: wherein he not only resolves aright, and takes things by the right handle, but is ready also in the execution of what he designs, and manages his affairs with ease, and with dexterity; whereas a fool both mistakes in his aim, and fumbles also in the easiest business, which he handles so awkwardly and untowardly, that it commonly miscarries. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Yea also when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.*] And though he would dissemble his folly, and endeavour to seem wise, he is so far from his aim, that in every thing he doth, whether great or small, he openly betrays his want of judgment: nay, by his very gait and behaviour, as well as by his words and actions, he tells every body (as plainly as if he said it in so many words) that he is a fool: which appears in nothing more than in his holding all for fools in comparison with himself. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.*] But a man's wisdom hath seldom a greater trial than when his prince is angry with him, and perhaps treats him hardly; which incenses a fool, and makes him leave the court, if not grow factious and rebellious: but it is better and safer advice to keep in the station wherein thou art, and to do thy duty faithfully, with a patient, but yet pensive spirit: for nothing so appeases a prince's offended mind, as to give way to his fury by mild and gentle words, and by modest, humble, and submissive behaviour; whereby a man also prevents a world of sins, into which he throws himself, if he yield unto disloyal thoughts. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler.*] And there are worse evils than this, that a wise and good man must patiently bear withal; particularly that great error which princes, it must be acknowledged, either through ignorance, imprudence, surprise, easiness, and being imposed upon by other men's false representations, subtilties, or ill affections, are too frequently guilty of: whereby they derive many mischiefs upon all their people; for which they must answer, as if they were committed by themselves. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.*] In advancing, I mean (which I have too often observed), the most witless, careless men, and of base condition; or suffering such who are noted for nothing but their folly, and their vices, to creep up to the most eminent dignities and offices; and in the mean time depressing noble persons, or making no account of them, though endowed no less with all excellent qualities, than with riches and honour. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.*] By the like senseless folly, I have observed mere slaves, that deserved not the meanest office in a private family (being fitter to be kept under by every body, than to be entrusted with the smallest power), appear in the greatest state, by reason of their

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high preferment; and men of great families, or of singular worth and merit, altogether slighted; nay, forced to wait upon them, as if they had been their lackeys. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*] Which foul indignities, notwithstanding, a wise and virtuous person should choose rather to wink at, and patiently endure, than think of moving any public disturbance; for such counsels are extremely hazardous, and commonly end in the ruin of those that give them: according to that known proverb among us, which admonishes us how dangerous it is to pursue our own desires and passions violently (especially against kings and princes), whereby men in heat, forgetting their own contrivances, have run themselves into that very ruin, as hunters do into the pit, which they prepared for others: and that other common saying, which warns us not to overthrow the well-settled laws and customs of church or state; for that is like the breaking down a hedge: wherein as a serpent many time lurks, which gives him that attempts it a deadly bite; so they frequently draw upon themselves their own destruction, who pull down the ancient government. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. *Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.*] We abound with proverbs to this purpose; which teach us that the giving public disturbance, by invading the rights of others (especially of kings) and endeavouring to change the form of government, is like removing the boundaries of lands, which raises great troubles; or like the taking much pains to pull down a building without judgment, some of the stones of which fall upon him that meddles with it, and crush him in pieces. Such is his folly, also, that fancies he can mend every thing that is amiss, and form and square the people exactly according to his rule: which proves just like an unskilful workman's cutting a knotty piece of wood; who only makes clefts and chips (as the other doth factions and rents), and, in the issue, gives a grievous gash to himself. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. *If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.*] This is sufficient to shew, how unprofitable all our endeavours are without true judgment. For as a rusty tool, though managed by the strongest man, is so far from effecting his desires, that it only tires his arm, unless he file and whet it, to recover its edge: so all the power in the world rather hurts than advantages him that hath it, unless it be guided and directed by wisdom and prudence; which can do far more, than violence and force, to correct the errors of kings, and mend the faults of their government. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. *Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.*] But of all other men he is the most dangerous, who spits his venom secretly against his governors; slandering and traducing all their actions in his private discourses, and thereby enraging people's minds against them; and giving them a more grievous wound than if they were stabbed with a weapon: for that may be prevented, or healed afterward; but this, like the biting of the most deadly serpent, which stopping its ear to all enchantments, poisons both inevitably and incurably. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 12. *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.*] See here again the wide difference between a wise man and a fool. The former of which, by his virtuous discourse, wins every one's (especially his prince's) favour; and doth good to those with whom he converses; but the other, by his ill tongue, not only hurts his neighbour, but plunges himself into endless troubles; out of which he cannot deliver himself, nor can any body him. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.*] And the more he talks, in the greater danger he is: for, though he begins only with senseless and impertinent stuff, he heats himself before he hath done into a rage; and then minds not either how injurious his discourse is unto others, or how mischievous unto himself.

Ver. 14. *A fool is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?*] No, though he be admonished of it he cannot desist. For he abounds with words, and while he thinks to mend the matter, he makes it worse; adventuring to talk not only of things civil, but of things sacred; and not only of things present, but of things past also, nay, of things to come: in which wiser men than he hath little or no skill; and yet the less he knows, the more confident and bold he is; when he doth not so much as foresee the evil he is bringing upon himself, by his foolish prating. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.*] Which is the more intolerable, because he torments himself and others with fruitless pains about the abstrusest matter; when he knows not the most trivial, that is as plain as the highway: for if he be engaged in any common business, he only tires himself with toil and labour, but is never the nearer: like a silly traveller, who, being ignorant of the road, goes about, if not through dangerous, yet through troublesome paths, and the farther he goes, perhaps, is the farther off from the place he intends. See Annot. [o]

Ver. 16. *Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!*] What a miserable condition then is that poor country in which abounds (as most places do) with a great many of these fools! And, besides, hath the unhappiness to fall under the government of a child: whose tutors, counsellors, guardians, and protectors, who have the management of all affairs in his minority, are so given to their pleasure, that they can find no time to mind seriously the public business; nor take any care to infuse principles of wisdom and goodness into their young prince's mind, but let him remain a child as long as he lives. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 17. *Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!*] And, on the contrary, the happiness of that nation is inexpressible, whose king is not only of an illustrious family, descended from the most ancient nobility, but, having had ingenious and liberal education, doth not degenerate from their heroical virtue: which teaches him to place such officers under him, in their several stations, as make pleasure wait upon business; which they first dispatch, and then refresh themselves, not to excess, but to fit themselves to return to their business again. See Annot. [q]

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Ver. 18. *By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.*] Being sensible, that as, through the negligence and gross carelessness of the master of a family, the house falls to decay; and, for want of timely reparation, the rain gets in and rots the roof, and then the supporters, and at last the very foundation of it: so, by that laziness and sloth, which is the effect of luxury and riot, kingdoms themselves go to wreck; and seasonable remedies not being applied to public disorders, the whole government by degrees grows out of frame, and is in the end dissolved. See Annot. [*r*]

Ver. 19. *A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.*] For these idle and dissolute persons, among other mischiefs, consume the public treasure, by their vast expenses in feasts, and all manner of merriment; which serve indeed for their present pleasure, but waste that which should make it lasting, and is of most universal use to support the prince's crown and dignity: and therefore, when the exchequer is exhausted, these men are tempted to fill it by the most grievous oppressions; nay, law and justice, and every thing else, are sold; virtue itself is of no price, but money alone is valued, and bears all the sway: which is another way of bringing all to utter ruin. See Annot. [*s*]

Ver. 20. *Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*] But notwithstanding all this, as I advised thee before, not to rise up in rebellion against thy sovereign, (ver. 8, &c.) so now let me add, that it is very foolish, as well as wicked, to be provoked by this ill management, so much as to speak an opprobrious word of him, or of his government, or ministers; nay, entertain not so much as a thought of it, though it may be done never so secretly, where none but thy wife, or most intimate friend, is admitted: for it is not safe to trust any body with so dangerous a secret, which it is most likely will not always be concealed; but, as it is certainly known to God, so will be carried, by some undiscerned means or other, with such swiftness to the prince's ears, as if the bird that sat in the window, or passed by when the words were spoken, had flown away immediately with the report of them. See Annot. [*t*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. He seems, in the first words of this chapter, to prosecute what he had said in the last clause of the foregoing; shewing how much good one fool may spoil, by the great mischiefs that ensue one foolish action: whereby a man, otherwise famed for wisdom, utterly loses his reputation. So most interpreters understand the latter part of the verse; which Melancthon, following the Vulgar, interprets quite contrary; that *a little folly*, or rather *folly for a little while, is better than wisdom and glory:* that is, seeming folly, like that of Fabius, who was condemned for his slow proceedings, and thought a cowardly fool, is better than wisdom which makes a glorious show, but doth not conduct things so safely as that captain did.

But this exposition agrees not at all with the similitude whereby Solomon illustrates what he here saith concerning folly, which is that of *dead*, or rather *venomous flies* (for the Hebrew phrase, *flies of death*, may better be translated *deadly*, than *dead* flies); which, though very little animals, yet falling into a pot of precious ointment, spoil it all when they putrefy: and not only take away the delicate scent, but turn it into a filthy noisome stink. For a fly is observed to be both *fœdum* and *fœtidum animalculum;* especially some sort of them, which seem here to be particularly denoted by the word *xebube:* being not merely bred out of filth, and delighting to live in it, but leaving behind them such a humour as is very offensive to the smell, and kills those creatures into whom they thrust their snouts. From whence the god of the Ekronites had his name of Baalzebub; (2 Kings i. 2.) which, if it were given him by his worshippers, signified his power to destroy those venomous flies which infested the inhabitants of that country: if by the Israelites, expressed their contempt of him, as a mean, and a filthy, sordid idol. For, therefore, St. Jerome thinks the prophet Isaiah compares the Egyptians to a *fly*, (vii. 18.) not only because they were a weak people, but *propter sordes idololatriæ, by reason of the sordid filthiness of their idolatry:* which was a great reproach to their famed wisdom; and made them vile, even in the opinion of pagan people.

I cannot here omit the reflection which the Lord Bacon hath made upon these words, (lib. viii. de Augm. Scient. cap. 2. parab. 11.) "That the case of men eminent for virtue, is very hard and miserable; because their errors, though never so small, are by no means pardoned. But as in a pure diamond, of great lustre, the very least speck or smallest cloud strikes the eye, and affects it with a kind of trouble; which in a grosser stone would scarce be observed: so in men of singular abilities, the least infirmities are presently espied, and become the matter of men's discourse, and are perstringed with a heavier censure; which in men of meaner parts or rank would either pass without notice, or easily procure pardon. *Therefore a little folly in a very wise man, a small sin in a very honest man, and a slight indecency of manners in a man of courtly and elegant behaviour, much derogates from their fame and reputation.* So that it would not be the worst course for excellent persons, *if they would mingle some absurdities* (so it may be done without guilt) *with these actions:* that they may maintain a kind of liberty to themselves, and confound the notes and characters of smaller defects."

[*b*] Ver. 2. From hence Solomon takes occasion to represent more largely, how much men suffer by their folly, and what advantages wisdom gives them: and treats of both with respect, not only to men's private, but to the public good. And, first, he shews what a difference there is between a wise man and a fool, in the management of any business. So I have interpreted this verse, which may be also thus paraphrased, *A wise man always takes honest courses; but a fool turns into by-ways.* Thus Greg. Thaumaturgus glosses; *A wise man is his own leader and conducter to the best things; but a fool inclines to the wrong side, nor will his folly ever lead him to any thing that is excellent.* Which St. Jerome expresses in this manner; *A wise man always thinks of the world to come, which leads to the right hand; but he that is a fool only of the present world, which lies on the left.* And quotes a famous passage of Lactantius (which I find in his Institutions, lib. vi. cap. 2.) concerning the letter Y, unto which the Pythago-

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reans resembled the course of human life. In which there is a time, when a youth finds his way cleft, as that letter is, into two parts or ways; and he stands doubting unto which he should incline. If he be so wise as to take the right-hand way, he is happy; if the other, he is miserable. Which sense Grotius follows: *The right hand is the way of virtue; the left, the way of vice.* Unto which we may reduce that of the Chaldee paraphrast, *The heart of the wise inclines to the law of God, which was given from God's right hand; the fool to silver and gold, which are the gifts of the left.*

But if this had been the sense, it would have been more proper to have said, the wise man's heart is on *the right hand;* not on *his* right hand: which is much different; and therefore I have omitted this in the Paraphrase (though I thought good to mention it here), and taken no notice of many other glosses; particularly that of Melancthon's, which seems something nearer to the sense: *The wise man hath power over his affections* (the right hand being the strongest, and the instrument of action in most men), *and can moderate them, as occasion requires: but a fool is under the government of his passions; and is hurried that way, which his anger, ambition, grief, and other blind affections, drive him.*

I will add this, that the meaning may be, *A wise man hath his wisdom always at hand,* to direct him what to do in public or in private business; whether he have to do with friends or enemies; in adversity, as well as in a prosperous estate (his mind being just like the right hand, which we use readily, upon all occasions, for all manner of actions): *but a fool is to seek;* and knows not which way to turn himself, &c. Which is much to the same purpose with what I have said in the Paraphrase.

[c] Ver. 3. And agrees with what follows in this verse; the first words of which signify as much as, *Moreover,* a fool is so silly that he cannot hide it. For though the rest of the diseases of the mind may be covered by artificial discourse, as the blemishes of our bodies are with our garments; only folly cannot be dissembled, but will appear to all, in every motion of him whose weakness it is.

There is another sense of the last words of the verse, besides that in our translation; which I have not neglected: because the words will bear the sense of the Vulgar; *viz. He saith every body is a fool.* Which St. Jerome interprets thus, *He judges all men by himself.* Symmachus thus, *He fancies himself the only wise man.* The LXX. (as St. Jerome observes) seem wide from the sense, who translate it thus: *All that he thinks is very vain.* Maldonate understands it differently from them all, in this manner: *In that wherein he himself offends, he reprehends others.*

[d] Ver. 4. And then Solomon proceeds to give a particular instance of this folly and wisdom; especially in the public state and government. Where it is great folly for a governor to carry himself haughtily and furiously; but if he do, it is no less folly in his people to oppose him with the like passions; and not rather to be patient and peaceable: which is the sense of ver. 4. Which some take for a counsel to governors; others to the subject. They that understand it as counsel to governors, translate it some of these ways; *If the spirit of a governor come upon thee,* that is, if thou art fitted for government, and advanced unto dignity, behave thyself humbly; and administer all things with great lenity: for that is the best way to heal public distempers. Or thus, *If thou art made a prince, discharge this office diligently,* and with vigilance: for if thou art remiss and careless, it will make thee fall into great errors. Or, as some will have it, in this manner, *Thou hast a desire to be in authority, suppress it;* or if it be offered thee, accept not of it: a private life is better; and less subject to the occasions of sin and danger. And some translate it thus, *If thou art in singular favour with the governor, keep thy station notwithstanding; and be not ambitious of preferment,* &c. Which is counsel unto subjects; and by *ruach (spirit)* of the ruler, most do not understand his *favour,* but his *anger:* and then also it may be taken in a different sense from that in our translation (making it still an advice to him that is in authority), that if anger come upon him he should reflect, and consider the station wherein he is; lest this passion make him act indecently, and transport him into great sins.

But the greatest part of interpreters taking the verse to be counsel to a subject, in case he incur the displeasure of his prince, I have followed that sense; which is almost agreeable to the coherence. And I have interpreted that advice, *not to leave his place,* as most do, for not quitting the duty of a subject: but have taken in also the most ingenious interpretation of the Lord Bacon. Who makes this a political advice to courtiers; not to relinquish their place and office, nor to retire from the execution of their charge, as many do when they see their prince angry with them. "Which arises partly out of an *impatience of disgrace;* partly lest they should *make the wound bleed afresh,* by coming into the presence; partly that their prince may see *how sorrowful and humble* they are: which makes them think fit to withdraw themselves from their employments; nay, to resign, perhaps, the offices and dignities themselves into the prince's hands.

"But Solomon disallows this way of cure, as hurtful and prejudicial; and that upon very good grounds. For, first, this course doth *too much publish the disgrace itself:* from whence both enemies and enviers grow more bold to hurt; and friends more timorous to help. Secondly, by this means it comes to pass, that *the wrath of the prince,* which, if it had not been made public, would have died perhaps of itself, *becomes now more fixed:* and having begun to overthrow the man, is carried on to his utter ruin. And lastly, this retiring *savours something of a malignant humour;* that is, fallen out with the times: which heaps the mischief of indignation upon the mischief of suspicion.

"The proper precepts, therefore, for a cure are these: which he thinks are contained in the last words, *Pliant demeanour pacifies great offences.* First, above all things *not to seem insensible, or not so affected as in duty he ought to be; the prince's displeasure;* either through *stupidity,* or a *stubbornness,* and pride of spirit. That is, let his countenance be composed, not to a sullen and contumacious, but to a grave and modest pensiveness; and in all manner of employments let him shew himself less pleasant and cheerful than he was wont to be: which it may be expedient, also, that some friend or other should represent to the prince; and insinuate seasonably, with what sensible grief he is inwardly afflicted. Secondly, *let him carefully avoid all, even the least occasion,* whereby either the thing itself, which was the first cause of the indignation, may be re-

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vived: or the prince apprehend a new occasion to be displeased with him again, or, upon any account whatsoever, to chide him before others. Thirdly, let him with all diligence seek, on the other side, all manner of occasions, wherein *his service may be acceptable to his prince;* that both he may shew a prompt and forward affection to redeem his forepast offence; and his prince may understand what a good servant he is likely to lose, if he thus cast him off. Fourthly, let him sagaciously either *lay the fault upon others;* or insinuate, that *it was committed with no ill intention,* in himself; or remonstrate *their malice* who accused him to the king, or aggravated his fault, more than it deserved. To conclude, *let him be diligent and watchful in all things, and intent upon the cure.*"

There is another great man of our own, who seems to take this for an admonition not to be false-hearted, by flinching from our station, when mighty men frown upon us. *In an upright course* (saith Bishop Sanderson, in his sermon upon 1 Cor. vii. 24. sect. 46.) *fear not the face of man, neither leave thy place, though the spirit of a ruler rise up against thee: patience will conjure down again that spirit in time, only if thou keep thyself within thy circle.* But I look upon this, which agrees not with the latter part of this verse, as an accommodation only of these words to his present purpose; and not as intended for the proper sense of them.

[*e*] But of all other follies this is the most mischievous, of which princes themselves are sometimes guilty: in preferring (as it follows, ver. 6, 7.) unworthy men (who are so unfit to govern others, that they cannot govern themselves) to the highest dignities, and perhaps trusts: and at the same time neglecting, if not depressing, men of worth and honour, of noble families, and sometimes of heroical virtue. Which is more provoking, because more pernicious, than the personal displeasure (beforementioned, ver. 4.) which they express towards any private man. For it is an universal grievance, and as if the ruler himself should give order for all the mischief which they do (as some expound that phrase *as an error),* and yet, notwithstanding, it is the wisest course not to be exasperated by it, to make any tumults and seditions; but to be patient and quiet, (ver. 8, 9.) So I have expounded these verses, in connexion one with another: for though there are those who by *ruler* here understand the devil; who thrusts the worst men into the best places (as may be seen in St. Jerome's commentaries); and others understand God, who permits this; yet the whole discourse is still to the same purpose: that senseless persons get into power; being more acceptable many times at court (as Melancthon glosses) than the wise and good. According to the ancient verses,

Ὁ βίος μάλιστα τοῖς πονηροῖς ἥδεται·
Πράττει δ' ἄριστα κόλαξ, ὁ συκοφάντης δεύτερος.

The world takes the greatest pleasure in bad men: the flatterer fares best in the first place; and next him the sycophant and false accuser. In the Roman story there are many instances of men preferred merely for their vices, of others only for money: some of which are collected by Joannes Filesacus, lib. viii. Selectorum, cap. 15.

[*f*] Ver. 6. I mentioned *vices* in the foregoing annotation [*e*] because *folly,* in the holy language, comprehends that, as well as silliness, or incapacity to manage affairs, and mindlessness, negligence, and sloth: which are both denoted in the Hebrew word סכל in this place: where the abstract (as they speak) being put for the concrete, we are to understand idle, ignorant, and senseless men; and that in the highest degree; and, being opposed to the *rich,* they are also supposed to be men of mean extraction, or condition. For which reason the rich also are to be understood, not simply men of estates, or great birth, but of excellent education, noble endowments of mind, and attentive unto business, &c.

[*g*] Ver. 7. The sense of this verse is not different from that of the former; but the same thing is set forth in both, by two illustrations: one taken from their place and dignity; the other from their equipage (as we now speak), wherein they appear upon their advancement. For to *ride* belonged unto great persons; as to go on foot, unto inferiors. And to ride on *horses,* in Solomon's time, was much more stately than to ride on *mules,* which were used by great men in David's time; (2 Sam. xiii. 29. 1 Kings i. 33.) or on *asses,* in former ages, (Judg. x. 4.)

[*h*] Ver. 8. Yet it is senseless to be enraged, by this preferment of senseless and unworthy men, into rebellion, as the wise man here shews by several proverbial sayings. In the application of which to this purpose, I have the approbation of Melancthon; who expounds the last words of ver. 8. and the last of ver. 9. concerning the punishment of those who go about to change the ancient laws, and the form of government. And it is more agreeable to the phrases of *breaking hedges,* and *removing landmarks,* or such-like things, than to apply it unto the mischiefs that princes bring upon themselves and their countries, by such imprudent promotions as are beforementioned: though that be true also, that such disorders give great disgust, and are the occasion of dangerous commotions.

Which commonly are most fatal, notwithstanding, to those that are so foolish as to advise, contrive, and excite them. Who bring that mischief on themselves which they intended should wholly have fallen upon others; as Solomon here shews by two similitudes: one taken from the pits digged for the entrapping *foxes, wolves,* and such-like creatures; or, as others will have it, from those that undermine the walls of towns, and often perish in the mines wherein they themselves have long wrought. Agreeable to that old saying which Aristotle mentions (in his third book of Rhetorics, cap. 9.) out of Democritus Chius, οἴτ' αὐτῷ κακὰ τεύχει ἀνὴρ, ἄλλῳ κακὰ τεύχων. The other, from a breaker of a *hedge,* or *fence,* or *wall,* (for so we translate this word, Numb. xxii. 24.) or any *partition* (so the LXX. there translate it by the word φραγμὸς), whereby men's grounds were separated, and kept in several: in which enterprise he meets with his death's wound from a serpent. Which were wont to *lurk* in rocks (Prov. xxx. 19.) and in holes of the earth, (Isa. xi. 8.) as well as in the bottom of *hedges,* or old *walls* (as the wise man here intimates), and in other dry places where there was no water. (Deut. viii. 15.) There were water-serpents also, (Amos ix. 3.) of which men were in less danger.

[*i*] Ver. 9. There is great variety of judgments concerning the sense of this verse: but that which I have given I am sure is not improper; which, in short, is this: that they who, out of love with novelty, will not let things alone in their place, but be altering and changing, though thereby

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they make great rents and distractions; do not only give themselves a great deal of trouble, and disturb the quiet of their own mind, but run the hazard of ruining themselves, together with whole kingdoms and churches. Therefore that saying of Pindar, quoted by Melancthon, should always be in people's minds: "It is easy to disturb a government, but God alone can settle it again."

The phrases are sufficiently explained in the Paraphrase: only I think fit to note, that the word which (following the LXX.) we translate *endangered*, is by Forsterus translated *aspergetur*, that is, hurt by the *shivers* of it.

[*k*] Ver. 10. There is no less variety, but rather greater, in the interpretation of this verse: wherein he seems to return to the commendation of wisdom. And it may still refer to what went immediately before; as I have applied it, in the latter end of my Paraphrase. In which I have not varied from our translation, if, after those words *put to more strength*, these be understood, *but all in vain:* and so the words may be translated out of the Hebrew, *If the iron be blunt, and he* (that cutteth with it) *do not whet the edge, it will overcome all the force he uses:* that is, will not cut as he would have it. And so the meaning of the verse is excellently expressed by the Lord Bacon in his preface to the second book of the Advancement of Learning. "These words (saith he) insinuate, that a wise election of the means doth more efficaciously conduce unto the accomplishment of any enterprise, than any enforcement or accumulation of endeavours." For, as the saying is, "Claudus in via antevertit cursorem extra viam;" *A lame man in the way will outrun a post out of the way.*

But though I take this to be the true sense, yet I shall here mention some others, that the reader may choose which he thinks most congruous. Some take that word *chajalim*, which we translate *strength*, for *forces* or *armies;* and make the sense this: *Where an army is governed by wisdom it prevails, though it be defective in weapons: for wisdom doth more to set things right (i. e.* doth more to make up the want of arms), *than arms can do to get the victory alone.* Others, who translate the former part of the verse to the same sense that I have done, translate the last part thus; *the excellence of industry is wisdom:* that is, wisdom in this excels all other tools; they are blunted by use, but it is sharpened thereby. And therefore they, the more they are used, give them that employ the greater labour; but this, the more it is exercised, gives us the less. Thus Maldonate. Some in this manner, If iron be blunt, it must be sharpened; and so must the sword of justice (when by the negligence of officers it hath lost its edge, and the earth is filled with violence, with thefts, and adulteries, &c.) be resumed and whetted by the magistrate, to the severe punishment of such wickedness.

Melancthon seems to express the sense of the Vulgar: As iron, being blunted, is not sharpened without great labour: so the companion of great diligence is wisdom: or wisdom cannot be attained without great industry. Which others, that follow that translation, express thus more largely: As a knife, or such-like instrument, having lain long rusty, cannot, without much whetting, be sharpened again: so the mind that is grown dull by long sloth and negligence, requires great labour, study, and exercise, to restore it to its former vigour. Which may be applied to government that is decayed, and cannot, without a wonderful diligence and prudence in those that have the management of things, be recovered.

There are those who look upon it only as an admonition what may be done by mere industry and pains-taking, though a man have not much wit, nor be much befriended by others, and yet gets up wonderfully in the world.

[*l*] Ver. 11. In the exposition of this also there is much variety; according to the Hebrew phrase, *master of the tongue* is expounded either of a *mere babbler*, and loose talker; or of a *backbiter* and slanderer. I have taken it in the latter sense; as St. Jerome, in the Vulgar edition, doth. And the former part of the verse may either signify a serpent that is not enchanted, or that cannot be enchanted by any means. For some such sort of serpents there were, as Bochartus observes, (lib. iii. de Sacr. Animal. cap. 6. par. ii.) and as appears out of Jer. viii. 17. and other places of Holy Scripture. Unto which, I think, the backbiter and detractor may be best compared: for nothing will restrain his virulent humour, nor defend one from the mischief which he doth in secret. I have connected this verse also with the precedent matter; as it may be, though we should take the words in the common sense; which is this: That as a serpent will bite if he be not charmed; so will he do mischief that talks much, if he govern not his tongue with great wisdom. Or, as others interpret the latter part of the verse, a man's words, though never so eloquent, (for so the word *lachasch* is used, Isa. iii. 3.) will do no good, to pacify a prince's mind, if he be not charmed at the very first, before he has fixed his anger.

Others take this verse separate from the rest, and understand no more by it than this; that a calumniator is like a serpent, that bites secretly; without so much as giving warning by its hissing. So Melancthon: who truly observes, that calumny is a most grievous pestilence; which rages and destroys whole countries. For it first kindles dissensions; and thence arise confusion of religion, wars, and desolations. Or, according to our translation, *A babbler can no more refrain from blurting out his own or others' secrets, than a serpent, if he be not charmed, can do from biting.* Which may be referred also to the matter foregoing, in this manner: He that gives himself a liberty of talking of every thing, blurts out even the secrets and the vices of princes; whereby he not only makes himself odious, but procures his own destruction.

[*m*] Ver. 12, 13. The three following verses may be also referred to the same matter; and the latter part of this is capable of another sense, than that in our translation; which is this: that *a fool's lips subvert all that a wiser man hath said.* So St. Jerome expounds it. There would be less harm in folly, saith he, if it would be content with its own rustic ignorance: but it affects to contradict the dictates of wisdom, and to affront prudent persons; nay, to supplant and overthrow them; whereby it becomes exceeding wicked.

[*n*] Ver. 14. And it is in vain to hope to amend this; because, as Solomon here observes, a fool thinks himself in this very thing to be wise and learned; that he is able to multiply words, though they be never so confused, without head or foot (as we speak), and be say the same thing over and over again, in a round; as the LXX. seem to

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understand the word *holleloth*, madness (in the foregoing verse), which they translate περιφερείαν, as if it were from the Hebrew word, which signifies a *dance*. Melancthon understands these three verses, as if they expressed the difference between wise counsellors or teachers, and such as are foolish, but fancy themselves very wise: though they direct their counsels and instructions merely by their own or others' blind affections. So Mardonius persuaded Xerxes unto his unhappy war; and Pompey had such-like instigators: but they were ignorant men, or considered not *what had been before*. So he expounds this fourteenth verse: *They who by foolish counsel, or pernicious doctrine, undo themselves and others, regard not former examples; nor have any prospect of future judgment.*

[o] Ver. 15. He refers all to this verse (where I have put two senses together) unto the same thing. These perverse wise men, saith he, make a great bustle to no purpose; and, endeavouring to reform many things, bring lamentable events upon themselves and others: because they are ignorant of the sense of mankind; and consider not the weight of business; nor discern what is fit to be done. Which is comprehended in these words, *They know not the way to the city, or to the court:* but are like the shepherd, saith he, who, coming to the court, had a looking-glass bestowed on him; in which contemplating himself, he fell into admiration of his own beauty: and thereby grew so insolent, that he was not only thrown out with disgrace, but broke his neck.

[p] Ver. 16. From hence Solomon takes occasion to admonish us, that the misery or welfare of a people depends very much upon the king that governs them. Who, if he be a child, must be governed by others; and if they prove bad, as commonly they are, all things go to wreck. This seems to be the sense of this verse; where by a *child* I understand a prince to whom the sceptre falls in his minority: though it may be taken (as Jo. Forsterus expounds) for one that is *rerum imperitus, unskilful in business;* (as in Jer. i. 6, 7. Isa. iii. 4.) and I have not omitted the common interpretation, which understands it of such a weak *prince*, as is wholly governed by his passions, and lets the worst of men govern him. Who, like children, think all is well, if they may but play, and follow their pleasure. Which they take so greedily, that they are drinking when they should be at council; dancing when they should be judging causes. So Jo. Drusius, I remember, expounds *eating in the morning*, in his annotations on Numb. xvi. 5. where he applies that place of Jeremiah, xxi. 12. to illustrate this; and observes, that the *morning* is the time of judgment and counsel; as the *evening* is for mirth or compotations. According to that of Socrates, *In the morning counsel, in the evening conversation.* And that of the Hebrews, "Non judicant in hora ebrietatis;" *They do not sit to judge in the hour of drinking; i. e.* in the evening. Which is so prejudicial to government, that there was a law among the Carthaginians, that no magistrate whatsoever should drink any wine at all, τοῦτον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν οἷ ἂν ἄρχουσι, *that year in which they bear any office*, &c. as we read in Plato, lib. ii. de Legibus, p. 674. edit. Serrani. And he admirably represents what the mischief of it is, when a mere youth governs, who is not able to undergo so weighty a charge, in the next book, p. 691.

[q] Ver. 17. And, on the other side, the felicity of a nation is unspeakable, when it is under the care of a gallant prince; whom he calls *ben chorim*. Which may either signify his descent, or the excellent qualities of his own person: or rather both, one who inherits the virtue of his ancestors. Who, though they should chance to leave him but a *child*, yet entrust him with such wise and faithful persons, that they infuse into him the spirit of his heroical predecessors: which makes the people willingly submit unto him. For, as Plato observes, that parents every where have the power of governing their children: so next to this it is consonant, γενναίους ἀγενῶν ἄρχειν, *that generous persons* (who do not degenerate from the virtues of their noble ancestors) *should govern those that are mean and base*, (lib. iii. de Legibus, p. 690.) Whence the Babylonian princes are called by this name, Isa. xxxvi. 12. where the Chaldee hath *bene herin*, the sons of ingenious and free men; or the sons of heroical persons. For hence comes the name of *Heros:* and thence Bacchus is called by the name of *Liber, i. e.* a prince or nobleman, as Bochartus rightly observes in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18. And so the LXX. translate *ben chorim* in this place, υἱὸς ἐλευθέρων: which word they elsewhere translate ἔντιμοι, *nobles*, (Nehem. v. 7. vi. 17.) and ἄρχοντες, (Isa. xxxiv. 12.) It is vulgarly derived from the *white garments*, or *robes of fine linen*, wherein such great persons appeared: but it is more likely to be of some foreign original; and may be best translated *illustrious* persons.

[r] Ver. 18. I have referred this and the next verse unto the same matter. And this represents, how necessary it is to be very diligent and careful to make up the smallest breaches, and correct the beginning of disorders; by shewing what ruin attends upon supine sloth, remissness, and negligence. Which is expressed in two most significant words; the first *(slothfulness)* implying such a sluggish temper, that a man will move neither hand to any work; the other *(idleness)* such a remissness and listlessness, as there is in a man that is asleep: when his *hands hang down*, (as the phrase is, Heb. xii. 12.) which seems to be the import of *shiphluth* in this place; coming from a word that signifies humble and dejected.

[s] Ver. 19. The next verse represents the vast power of money: which therefore a prince should be sure to have at command; because it commands all other things. As he finds, when he is in want of it; and is thereby tempted to squeeze his people unjustly; or to set all things to sale: which is another way of expounding that phrase, *money answers all things*. I cannot omit here to note, that it would not be absurd, if this verse should be connected with ver. 17. to signify the happiness of a nation, whose prince takes care that his people want not provision (*bread* and *wine* in the language of the Hebrews signifying all that is necessary for human life); but especially that the money of the nation, whereby all things are purchased, be not exported.

[t] Ver. 20. But whatsoever negligence, or profuseness and waste there be, it should not provoke any wise and good man to speak contemptuously of his sovereign, or of his ministers: if he consider merely how unsafe it is to make such reflections on him. For there are no ears so faithful, no place so secret, as that they may be trusted with such words: *the ears of kings*, according to the old saying, *being as long as their arms*. That is, they can as

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easily discover crimes, as punish them: they have spies on purpose every where; or men to ingratiate themselves will turn accusers; or loyal persons may, some way or other, come by the knowledge of it, and think themselves bound to let their sovereign know who are his enemies.

Thus most interpreters and the most learned understand this verse: and therefore I have followed no other interpretation in my Paraphrase. For thus that admirable person, S. Bochartus, glosses upon these words: (Epist. qua respond. ad. iii. quest. p. 37.) The true mind of Solomon is, that kings do not want their προσαγωγέας καὶ κηρυκείους, *emissaries and curious observers;* by whom they learn what is most secret. Which was the reason that Midas was represented by the poets with assos' ears; because he had those that listened and hearkened in all parts of his kingdom: and brought him news of every thing, that was but whispered by his subjects.

And thus St. Jerome: The simple sense is, that we take care we be not overcome by anger and fury, to speak evil of our prince, or detract from him: for he may, some way or other, hear it, contrary to our expectation, and make us suffer for our ungoverned tongue. That is the meaning, saith he, of the last part of the verse; which is an hyperbolical expression, like that in common speech when we say, *The walls that are conscious to what you speak will discover it.* Nay, this very proverbial hyperbole is used in good authors, for a thing very secret, *Unless some bird saw it.* So Aristophanes, in his comedy which hath its name from birds:

Οὐδεὶς εἶδεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τὸν ἐμὸν, πλὴν εἴτις ἂν ὄρνις.

None ever set eye upon my treasure, unless perhaps some bird.

And Suidas cites this verse out of the same poet (which more illustrates the sense I have given of this phrase in the Paraphrase):

Οὐδείς με θεωρεῖ πλὴν ὁ περιπτάμενος ὄρνις.

None sees me, unless the bird that passeth by.

But I am not satisfied whether Solomon had not respect to something else; and intimated that some prophet might make the discovery: as Elisha did of many things spoken in the king's own bedchamber, (2 Kings vi. 9.) The Chaldee paraphrase, by *that which hath wings*, understands the heavenly ministers; and so many of the Hebrews: about which, though they talk many fabulous things, yet the meaning may be, the angels shall, one way or other, bring it to light, and give occasion to the discovery. For, as a great man of our own observes, (Bp. Taylor, lib. iii. Duct. Dub. chap. iii. rule 3. n. 3.) *the government of the other world reaches strangely even unto us;* "and we speak not a word in vain, but, by the Divine providence, it is disposed to purposes that we understand not. And therefore it is not safe to speak evil of *magistrates* in our private houses; lest the angel that attends us order it so, that it pass into publication. But as for the *king* (who is above the *rich* or mighty), *call him not accursed in thy heart:* which being a thing that can only be perceived by God, who is the searcher of the heart; it shews that, as angels take care of the rich, the wise, the mighty, and noble; so kings are the peculiar care of God," &c.

And, indeed, as the same Bochartus adds, it appears from hence, that Solomon doth not deter us from this sin by the mere fear of dangers; for he lays a restraint not only on our words, but on our thoughts: which are known only unto God. And if we may not in thought detract from him, how much less speak a reproachful word of him; or move rebellion against him.

I shall only add two things more, and conclude this chapter with a notable discourse of Martin Luther: first, that some of the Hebrews who take the angels to be here meant, thereby understand the devil: as our Saviour, by the *fowls of the heaven*, understands ὁ πονηρὸς, *the evil one;* (Matt. xiii. 4.) but especially *night-birds*, they say (who may seem here to be meant, where he speaks of the *bed-chamber*), denote the devil and his angels. Whence that proverb among the Arabians, *Speak where there is no night-bird;* that is, where no creature hears.

Secondly, the last words of the verse are capable of this sense (if we distinguish between *bird of the air*, and *that which hath wings:* taking the one for *angels*, and the other for *men;* who minister to kings as angels do to God), that the angels will report our blasphemy in heaven; and some or other will be found to reveal it, and carry the news of it to the king upon the earth. Gregory Neocæsariensis suggests the former part of this: who thus expounds the words, *Swift and winged messengers carry all to the only rich and great King, discharging both a spiritual and rational ministry.*

It will not be unuseful, much less unseasonable, in such an unruly age as this, to let the reader understand how deeply the first reformers of religion laid this precept to heart; by transcribing some of Luther's admonitions, in his annotations on this verse.

"The worse and the more malignant (saith he) the world is, the more studious and laborious Solomon teaches us to be, in the doing our duty. Particularly, in *honouring magistracy;* because it is a Divine ordinance, and the better part of the world: by which God manages all things under the sun. But the ungodly begin their wickedness chiefly in the contempt of magistrates; when they hear how God blames and reproves them in the Holy Scriptures. But it belongs to the Divine office to find fault with magistrates, and to rebuke them. And therefore, though thou hearest it, yet do not imitate it. For thou art not God; nor the ordainer, no; nor the reformer and restorer of the Divine ordinance. But as God reproves them, so thee also, in the Holy Scriptures; that thou mayest do thy duty, and not meddle with what belongs to them. Whereas thou forgetting the beam in thy own eye, beginnest to spy the mote in another man's: correcting thy superiors, by whom thou rather art to be corrected. And if thou shouldest sustain their office, wouldest offend more than they do, and not do so much good as is performed by them. The meaning therefore of Solomon is this: I have spoken much of princes, how they undo the world: but do thou reverence them, notwithstanding that; for they are not a human ordinance, but a Divine. St. Peter, indeed, calls the king a *human creature;* because he is assumed from among men, but his authority is Divine: and though princes be bad, they are to be honoured because of this ordinance of God. Why then wilt thou speak evil of those who are vexed with so many and such great cares and labours for thy peace: if they be good? And if they be bad and foolish, their own impiety is mischief enough to

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them, and brings them into sufficient danger. Bear with them then, and compassionate them; rather than rail upon them, and revile them," &c.

Yes, will some answer; but we may say what we please of their ministers. Not so, saith the wise man in this place, *Curse not the rich; i. e.* men in great authority under the king. For (as the same Luther discourses upon the first verse of this chapter), "just as we see flies fall into a pot of excellent ointment, and there dying and corrupting, spoil it all: so when excellent counsel is given in the kingdom, in the senate, in war; behold there comes some mischievous knave or other, and utterly dashes it: so that it hath no effect. But as we are compelled to endure those poisonous flies; so we must be content to suffer these pestilent counsellors."

CHAP. XI.

ARGUMENT.

As obedience to governors, and patience under ill government, are the means (he shews in the foregoing chapters) to preserve peace and quietness; which are the great blessings of human life: so in peaceable, quiet, and easy times nothing contributes more to our happy living, than the constant exercise of charity, in works of mercy; which make us beloved of God and man. Upon which, therefore, the wise man here insists largely; in the six first verses of this chapter: and then presses men to it by the consideration, that there is no pleasure like this, while they live; and that as they cannot keep what they have long, but death will rob them of all: so they must give an account of what they have enjoyed; and therefore had best make such an use of it, as will stand them in stead at that time. This I take to be the sum of this chapter.

Ver. 1. *CAST thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*] Now, having shewn how thou oughtest to behave thyself towards those above thee, look down a little upon those below thee; and believe that nothing is more profitable (though the world think otherwise), as well as obliging, than to be kind and charitable unto all men; but especially to the poor, miserable people, though they be not so good, perhaps, as they ought to be; but will ungratefully forget all thy benefits, and never think of them more; or, at least, are never likely to make thee any return, no more than if thou didst sow thy seed on the sand or in the sea: let not that discourage thee; for when thou thinkest not of it, God will requite thee, either in this world or in the next; nay, there may come a time, when some of those who have been relieved by thee, may do thee service. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*] Give therefore unto others some part of the good things, which God hath given thee; and give very liberally, and be not weary neither of well-doing; but though there be a great many suitors that solicit thy charity, extend thy bounty to them, rather above than beneath thy ability: for thou knowest not how calamitous the times may shortly be, and then the good thou hast done, will stand thee in greater stead than all the goods thou enjoyest: which perhaps may be taken from thee, and leave thee nothing to do good withal; but make thee an object of other men's charity; which no person hath greater reason to expect, than he who, when he had wherewithal, hath been kind to others in that condition. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*] Look up to the heavens, and imitate the clouds; which are not filled with moisture for themselves; but pour it down freely and plentifully upon the thirsty earth; even upon the barren as well as upon the fertile soil, without any difference: and look upon the earth, and learn from the trees to be fruitful in good works, while thou art alive, for when thou art dead, none can raise thee up again to exercise that charity which now thou neglectest; no more than a tree can be made to bear when it is cut down, but which way soever it falls, whether to a cold or a warmer quarter, there it remains for ever, without so much as leaves. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*] And do not put off thy charity until another time; under a pretence that now the times are hard, or thou shalt be better able hereafter, or mayest find fitter objects for it, and do more good with it: for as he that will not sow, till the wind blow from a favourable quarter, may let the seed-time pass over; and he that will not reap, because he is afraid of every cloud that threatens rain, may lose his harvest; so they that will do no good, till the times be just as they would have them, or till they find objects against whom there lies no exception, will never want reasons to excuse their duty, and defer it till they have no opportunity for it. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*] Trust God for all such things as those, and do not rely upon thy own understanding, which comprehends very little of what is before thee; for instance, whence the wind comes; what makes it blow and cease; how the soul comes into the body and departs out of it; how the body itself is formed in the womb; by what power, and how it goes to work, hardening some part of the matter into bones, and softening others into flesh, &c. And therefore much less art thou able to comprehend the providence of God, who disposeth all things; and know, for instance, whether it will be a dear year or a cheap, whether thou and thy heirs shall live or die; lose or keep an estate; particularly, what strange ways God hath to blast or to bless thy designs; making thy estate dwindle by saving, and grow wonderfully by giving away bountifully: which seems to diminish; but, by means as secret as the growth of a child in the womb, increase and enlarge it. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*] Let nothing therefore discourage thee from taking all opportunities to give thy alms incessantly; early and late; when thou art young, and when thou art old; when things smile upon thee, and thou art in a declining condition; for thou knowest not, which will hit to do the most

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good unto others, and to bring the greatest blessing back upon thyself: or whether all may prove alike beneficial unto both. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.*] Let not love of thy own pleasure make thee regardless what becomes of other men: for though it is true, life is full of delight when we are in a prosperous estate, and we are entertained with great variety of pleasure when we look about us and behold all the good things, the sun shews the bounty of heaven hath provided for us; yet, believe it, there is no satisfaction comparable to that of having done abundance of good with that which he bestows upon us. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.*] If God therefore should bless a man with a healthful body and a very long life, I do not forbid him to take the comfort of it; but advise him rather (as I have often done), with a mind free from solicitude and carefulness, to enjoy all the innocent pleasures it can afford him: only let them be tempered with these two reflections: first, that as the fairest sun that ever shone, will set, and the night follow it; so the most merry life will have an end, and then we must lie down in our graves longer than we have lived, without the least glimpse of these joys. Secondly, that while we live, nothing which we expect hereafter, can give us more contentment than what we enjoy at present; and will slide away also as fast, and leave us altogether unsatisfied, unless we have done some good with it. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*] And there is one thing, above all other, which if the most childish youth would consider, and always carry in mind, I might give him full liberty to be as jocund and merry as his frolic age inclines him; to banish melancholy thoughts; and, while he hath the briskest taste of them, to invent all manner of pleasures for his entertainment; denying himself nothing that he desires, and gratifying all his senses: it is this, that he must give a strict account of all his actions unto God; who will deal well with him, if he have kept himself within his bounds, and enjoyed only lawful pleasures, with thankful acknowledgments unto him; but will punish him for all his extravagances and forgetfulness of him, with torments infinitely greater than all his sinful delights. And this, be it known to thee, whosoever thou art that readest this, is a certain truth. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.*] And therefore, by the thoughts of this, I advise thee, also, to suppress and banish that fierceness, rage, sadness, fretting, and vexation, with all such-like perturbations of mind, unto which, in the heat of thy blood, thou art subject, when any thing crosses thee (suppose when thou art only reproved for thy faults); and let no filthy desires, which then are strong, and would plunge thee in all wickedness, stay with thee: for, if such care as this be not taken to lay restraints upon him, there is nothing more senselessly foolish, rash, inconstant, and froward to ruin itself, than man in his childish youth: when he is in the dawning, as we call it, of his days, and comes first acquainted with the pleasures of this world. See Annot. [*k*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. Charity being the subject of his discourse in the first six verses of this chapter (as was observed in the Argument), he begins with the proper object of it: those who, as our Saviour speaks, Luke xiv. 14. are not likely to recompense us again. Thus this first verse (about which there are various conceits), I think, may be most naturally expounded. And it is a very ancient exposition, as appears by the words of Gregory Thaumaturgus; which are these in English: *It is just to communicate unto others, &c. for, though for the present it may seem to be lost (and thrown away, as we speak), like the bread that is cast upon the water; yet, in process of time, thy love to mankind will appear not to be unprofitable and without fruit.* And, after the same manner, Greg. Nazianzen in aftertimes, (Orat. xix. p. 298.) speaking of the liberality of his father to the poor, saith, he proceeded upon this maxim: that it is much better, for the sake of those who may be worthy, to give to those who are unworthy, than for fear of bestowing our charity upon the unworthy, let worthy people want it. To which that seems, saith he, to belong, which we read in Solomon [*Cast thy bread upon the water*], *Which is not thrown away and quite lost, in the account of him that justly estimates things; but is sent thither where all that we do is laid up; and shall in due season meet us again, though we think not of it.*

And, to strengthen this, it is observed by some, that *waters* in Scripture signify great affliction and misery, (Psal. xviii. 17. lxvi. 12.) And therefore the sense of the proverb is, not of sowing in a fertile ground, by the rivers; or in a soil well watered, from whence men naturally expect a fruitful crop (as some expound it); but of sowing (*i. e.* giving alms) there, from whence we expect no fruit; no more than if we threw the seed in a rapid river; in which it is carried away, nobody knows whither, and seems utterly lost.

And so it may be applied also to ungrateful people; as I have touched in the Paraphrase: and I shall not trouble the reader with other expositions, which may be found in most commentators; only naming this of Maldonate (which agrees well enough with that which I have followed), *Give to the poor, whose miseries are so great that their faces are all wet and besmeared with tears.* And though there be many of them, be not sparing, if thou art able to receive them; for *waters* signify sometime a multitude of people in the Scripture language. But that is the sense of the next verse; and therefore, upon the *face of the waters*, is as much as upon those, *who will be gone presently*, like the waters of a river; and never bring any thing back to us to reward us: if they do, is more than could be expected.

As for the word *bread*, it signifies any benefit whereby the poor may be supported: especially all sorts of food (1 Sam. xiv. 24. where it comprehends *honey*, and every thing that was edible), more particularly that food which is made of corn; (Gen. iii. 19.) and from thence signifies *corn* itself, of which bread is made, (Isa. xxviii. 28.) And so St. Jerome here expounds it, agreeable to what I said above, of sowing seed in the water.

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[*b*] Ver. 2. And as in the first verse he has respect to the *quality* of the persons, unto whom we are to give; so here to the *number* of them, and the quantity of our alms; which is expected, perhaps, by a great multitude. Yet let not that damp it, saith he, out of a fancy that it will undo us, to relieve them all: but, if we be able, let us help them; and though more still come when we have extended our charity according to our utmost ability, let us rather go beyond it (as the apostle saith the Macedonian Christians did, 2 Cor. viii. 3.) than let miserable creatures perish. Thus Greg. Nazianzen seems to understand these words, *seven, yea eight*. Seven is a complete number; eight added to it denotes something above that which we account perfection. His words are these, that *his father gave not only*, τοῖς περιττοῖς, *out of his superfluity; but* τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις, *out of his necessaries; according to the prescription of Solomon, Give a portion not only to seven: but if an eighth came, he was not here sparing; but much more ready to give than others are to get*. In short, he means, give *most liberally*, ἀφειδῶς, as Greg. Thaumaturgus here expresses it, *not sparingly*, but *profusely*. I omit other glosses upon the verse, and the criticism which some make upon the word *portion*: which they think, alludes to what was sent from feasts unto the poor, or those that were absent: of which there is no certainty. I will only note, that here again Solomon contradicts the vulgar principle, upon which covetous wretches move; and directs the quite contrary. They think all is lost that is given away in charity: no such matter, saith the Preacher; (ver. 1.) the fruit of it will be found hereafter, beyond what can be imagined. O, saith the covetous man again, I know not what will be hereafter: now I have enough, but in the latter end of my life I may want; and therefore it is best to save whilst I may. No, saith the Preacher; for that very reason, give; because thou knowest not what may be hereafter; when that may be taken away from thee, which now thou wilt not bestow upon needy people, &c.

[*c*] Ver. 3. In this verse he illustrates both the *duty* and the *reason* of it. The former by the *clouds*, which are a fit emblem of charity: the second, by the *trees*, which can bring forth fruit no longer than they continue joined to their root; from which being separated, they bear no more, nor can be fixed to their root, as the clouds may be filled with water again. So I have interpreted the latter part of this verse: which Grotius understands as if it meant no more than the foregoing: *Do good to men without distinction; like him who, when he cuts down a tree, regards not which way it falls*. I omit other interpretations, and shall only mention Maldonate's gloss upon this verse, which is ingenious enough. He urges us, saith he, to do good while we live, by two reasons: first, from the *profit of it*, because we shall receive more than we give; like the clouds, which receive from the earth but a thin vapour; which they return to it in the most copious showers. The second, from the *impossibility* of being in a capacity to do good when we are dead: for then, like a tree, we must continue as we are, when death seizes us; and never be restored to our former condition again. Corranus alone (as far as I can find) expounds the latter part thus, in his Annotations: *A tree, in what place soever it is planted, there abides, and brings forth fruit: and so ought we to help others by all manner of means; in whatsoever place or time we live*. And he takes *north* and *south*, for all parts of the world. If any think fit to apply this, unto the unalterable condition wherein we must remain in the other world (like a tree cut down, which, if it fall towards the north, cannot change its posture, and turn to the south), they cannot follow a fitter gloss upon the words than this of Luther's: *If the Lord find thee in the south; that is, fruitful and rich in good works, it will be well: but if in the north; that is, barren of good works, it will be ill with thee. Howsoever thou art found, so shalt thou be judged; and so thou shalt likewise receive.*

[*d*] Ver. 4. And then follows here an admonition to take the first opportunity of doing good; and not to defer it, because now it may seem unseasonable, and we fancy it may do better another time. Which the Lord Bacon extends unto all other things, as well as alms. "There is no greater, or more frequent impediment of action (saith he, in the conclusion of the first chapter of the eighth book of Advancement of Learning), than an over-curious observation of decency; and of that other ceremony attending on it, which is too-scrupulous election of time and opportunity. For Solomon saith excellently, *He that observeth the wind*, &c. We must make opportunity oftener than we find it."

And thus that great prince Xerxes (otherwise not very prudent) speaks very discreetly in Herodotus, lib. vii. *Be not fearful of all things; nor consider every thing minutely: for if in the consideration of business thou wilt weigh every thing alike, thou shalt never be able to do any thing*. And thus Melancthon understands this place, *As events are not in our power*, (which he takes to be the meaning of ver. 3.) *so he that will have certain and circumscribed events* (that is, such and such things come to pass) *before he act, will never attempt any thing*.

And so a great divine of our own expounds it: "If we will suspend our resolution till we can bethink ourselves of something free from all inconveniences; in most of our deliberations we shall never resolve upon any thing at all: God having so tempered things, that every commodity hath its incommodiousness, every conveniency some inconvience attending it; which, many times, all the wit and industry of man are not able to serve." (Bishop Sanderson's Sermon upon 1 Cor. x. 24. p. 245.)

St. Jerome also elegantly accommodates these words to negligent pastors; who will not preach, but when the people are very desirous to hear; and there is a fair gale breathing to favour their design. And gives this advice to us: Do not say, *This is a fit time, that is unprofitable: for we are ignorant what is the way, and what is the will of the Spirit, which dispenseth all things*.

[*e*] Ver. 5. In this verse he seems to pursue the same metaphor of the wind, which blows uncertainly; and nobody knows whence, nor from what causes. And therefore from our ignorance of that, and indeed of all other things, which we are here conversant withal; of our own soul, for instance (which our translators understand by the word *ruach, spirit*), and of our body, or of that *vis formatrix*, how it goes about its work, to make this body of ours in the womb, which may possibly be meant by *spirit*, (Job xxiii. 4. Psal. civ. 30.) Solomon persuades us not to presume to know, how God intends to order the course of this world, in his overruling providence; and therefore to do our duty, and leave events to him.

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[*f*] Ver. 6. Imitating the husbandman (with which metaphor he began this discourse, and now concludes it), who, not knowing which will prosper, sows both early corn and late. So Symmachus understands this verse to be an allusion to those that sow some very forward seed; which perhaps may hit, when that which is sown at the ordinary time doth not: or, perhaps, both may succeed and bring forth fruit, to their great enriching. Others take *morning and evening*, only to signify all times.

[*g*] Ver. 7. I have continued this verse with the foregoing, and supposed (what all interpreters do in the third and fourth verses) that the comparison is imperfect: there being only the πρότασις (as Hermogenes speaks), the proposition of the sentence, and the ἀπόδοσις (that which answers unto it) left to be made by the reader: which I have supplied from the sense of the whole foregoing discourse in this chapter.

Others think a new discourse here begins for the conclusion of the whole book; and that after all he had said of happiness, he advises every one to think of another life, and not expect to find it in this.

Or, as some understand him, his meaning is, *Now you have seen wherein happiness doth not, and wherein it doth consist; therefore do not either imagine there is none at all here in this world, or that it is greater than really it is: but take a middle course, which I have shewn you, and look upon this life as having pleasure in it, but not absolutely perfect; yet such as our condition will permit: begun here, and to be completed in another world.*

[*h*] Ver. 8. The beginning of this verse I have expounded according to the Hebrew, where the words run thus, as St. Jerome himself translates them: *If a man live many years, let him rejoice in all these things*, &c. And the latter part of the verse, I have supposed, contains two motives to moderation in our present enjoyments, and to make us think of doing some good with them, as the highest pleasure of all. Because they will have an end, when we can no longer enjoy them; and because, while we have them, they run away apace, as all that follows will do, and leave us empty and dissatisfied, unless we have made a good use of them: upon which we may reflect, when they are gone, with some pleasure.

[*i*] Ver. 9. To those motives, he here adds the most considerable thing of all: which is expounded two ways by interpreters. Some taking these words as a *permission*, under such restraints as he mentions in the end of the verse; others, as *ironically* and *sarcastically* (as the Greek phrase is) spoken, by way of mockage and bitter scoff. The two first phrases (*rejoice*, and *let thy heart cheer thee*) incline to the former way, being commonly used in a good sense: the two last (*walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes*) unto the other way, being commonly used in a bad. Therefore the scope of the place, and the coherence, must determine it. And as the LXX. and St. Jerome go the first way, so it agrees best, in my opinion, with what went before; and therefore so I have paraphrased it. And considering that they are two different words in the beginning of the verse, which we translate as if they were the same (*viz. young man* and *youth*), I have not done amiss, I think, but expressed them more significantly by these words, *childish youth*. And so they are distinguished in the last verse; where that word which here we translate *youth*, we more truly translate *childhood*: which yet goes before youth.

[*k*] Ver. 10. Here I have followed the judgment of St. Jerome; who, under *anger* (or *grief*) comprehends all the perturbations of the mind: and under *evil of the flesh*, all the hurtful pleasures of the body. And accordingly I have expounded the whole verse, with respect to the danger youth is in, by the fiery motions of both sorts: the former of which incline men to imitate the wild beasts; the other sink them into the condition of the dullest brutes.

The word we here translate *youth* signifies the *peep of day*; in our language, the *appearing of the morning*: and therefore is to be understood of our entrance upon the most pleasant time of our life. Which, as well as *childhood*, is but *vanity*; that is, presently vanishes (as some will have it), and will be soon gone: or rather, childhood and youth, signifying all that is done in that age of our life: the meaning is, it is an age of great levity, folly, and indiscretion, &c.

And, therefore, as Luther observes, the great care of mankind should be to season *youth* with right opinions and a good sense of things; and then it is not to be denied all pleasures, of which it is very desirous; much less shut up from the very sight of them, for it abhors solitude. And this is to begin at the wrong end of education; which must be applied first to the mind, not to the body: and when the mind is well tinctured, the body will be easily governed. That is, neither follow filthy pleasures, nor be carried away with furious passions, &c. the benefit of which will be unspeakable: for they that live pleasantly and quietly in youth, are likely to arrive at and enjoy a comfortable old age.

Some begin the twelfth chapter at this verse, and others begin it with the foregoing: but I have followed our translation, and the most interpreters.

CHAP. XII.

ARGUMENT.

He continues his advice to young men (begun in the two last verses of the foregoing chapter), wishing them to season their minds with such an early sense of God, and of their obligations to him, that it might govern them in all their ways; and be a comfort to them in old age, which (by a long description of it) he shews will be a melancholy time at best. After which discourse, he concludes the book, with a brief sum of the scope and design of it; inserting something concerning the author, which might dispose the reader to attend the more heedfully, unto the conclusion of the whole matter.

Ver. 1. *REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*] The best counsel, therefore, that I can give every man is this, That he would awaken, and preserve in mind perpetually, an awful sense of God; unto whom he is so deeply indebted, that he received his very being from him; and, therefore, let him apply himself faithfully and affectionately to his service, in his most vigorous age, as soon as ever he can consider that he is not his own, but God's, who formed him in his mother's womb, took him thence, and brought

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him up to be a man: do not defer this weighty business, till thou art sick, or all thy faculties so broken by the infirmities of old age, that though it last several years, yet they shall prove flat and dull, irksome and tedious, to thee: and no pleasure at all left in them, but only the remembrance of a well-spent life; without which, instead of thanking God, thou wilt be apt to do nothing but complain, or groan, under the weight of one evil or other that falls upon thee. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.*] For what joy can a man have, or what misery can he be without (and therefore what folly is it not to think of God before that time), when the natural heat and vigour are quite spent, and all the powers and faculties of soul and body in such a languishing condition, that he is altogether unfit for the offices of piety; particularly for the acknowledgment of God's benefits, the very remembrance of which is slipped out of his mind, or he hath but a dull perception of them; being no more sensible of the benefit of the sun itself, when it gives the brightest light, than he is of the moon or stars; but the day is as sad, and as full of pains and heaviness to him as the night; and there is no end of them, no intermission: but they succeed one another, as the clouds do in a rainy season, when one is no sooner emptied, but another is gathered, and ready to discharge itself in showers. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.*] Is this a proper time to be allotted to the service of God, when a man cannot serve himself? his hands being struck with a palsy, and made unable either to feed or defend his body; his feet bending under the weight of it, having lost their power to support him; his teeth likewise so rotten, or worn away, or fallen out, that they cannot chew his meat; and the sight of his eyes, which were wont to shew him things at a great distance, now so failing him, that he cannot know one man from another, though they stand hard by him: See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.*] Is this the time to gain acceptance with God, when he is despised by men; and excluded the public assemblies, because his voice is so low, that nobody can hear him? Nay, his lips look as if they were closed, and fall so inward, that he can but mumble; by reason of the loss of his teeth, the weakness of his lungs, and the defect of other instruments of speech: nor can he recruit himself as he was wont by rest; for sound sleep departs from his eyes, and he awakes early as the birds, but is not pleased at all with their songs: his hearing being so dull and flat, that he is not moved by the best music in the world; though he listen and incline his ears unto it with never so much diligence. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.*] For joy and all such pleasant passions being fled away, melancholy fear alone remains; which makes him scarce dare to tread in the highway, much less (his head is so giddy) to go up a pair of stairs; nay, he thinks himself unsafe in the strongest fortress: such is the feebleness of old age, which looks venerably by its gray hairs, but they are an early sign of approaching death, and are made contemptible by his crumpled shoulders, hips, and back: which, as they are of themselves a sufficient load, so are relieved and supported by no bodily pleasures, the very desires of which now fail him: for there is but a very short step between him and his grave; unto which if he be carried with the usual solemnities, it is all his friends can do for him. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.*] Remember therefore thy Creator, while the noble faculties of sense and motion remain entire, and strong and lively; for the time will come (and that will be very unfit for this, or indeed any other business) when they will be totally disabled: the nerves, for instance, will shrink up and be dispirited; the brain itself, and all those precious vessels wherein it is contained, be of no use at all unto thee: for the very fountain of life, the heart, will fail, and the veins and arteries no longer carry the blood round the body; but the motion will cease, by the decay of that power, which now thrusts it forward in a continual circulation. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*] And then what remains, but that the soul and body being parted, they go to their several original? The body, though now so fair a fabric, to the earth out of which it was taken (according to that ancient doom passed upon it, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*); but the soul unto God, to be judged by him, according to what it hath done in the body since he sent it thither. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.*] And if this be the conclusion of all our labours, I have reason to conclude this book as I began it; and listen, I beseech you again, to him who proclaims nothing to you but what he hath proved in this discourse; that there is no solid satisfaction to be found in any thing here below, where all things are both full of care and trouble, as well as uncertain and perishing: and therefore it is the height of folly to take great thought for this present life, and to lay up nothing for the life to come. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.*] Perhaps you may still think otherwise; and therefore, I have this now to add (and so shall sum up all I have said), that I am as likely to judge aright as another man; being endued with wisdom from above, by an extraordinary gift of God, (1 Kings iii. 12. iv. 30, &c.) whose goodness also I have imitated, in communicating my knowledge freely unto others: nay (knowing that by sloth or envy the greatest wisdom may be lost), the more I understood, the more diligent I was in informing others; nor did Divine illuminations make me either neglect my own studies, or other men's inventions, but I listened unto all from whom I might hope to learn any thing; and both weighed what they said, and also made an exact search into things myself: of

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which, that not only the present age, but posterity also, might reap the benefit, I have gathered together, and aptly disposed and fitted to all capacities, abundance of excellent pithy sentences for instruction in wisdom and virtue, (1 Kings iv. 32.) See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.*] Thus I, that preach these things, have employed my pains, in seeking (with no less diligence than covetous men do for money) both the most pleasant, and the most useful, and most certain knowledge: and having found what I sought, I may safely affirm, that nothing is said by me but what ought to be most acceptable, being apt to give the greatest contentment and delight: nothing written by me, but what I found in the Divine writings, or is so exactly agreeable thereunto, that it is a straight and faithful rule of life: there is nothing frivolous or doubtful in them; but they contain the most solid wisdom, as sure and true as truth itself. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.*] And there is the same power in them (as there is wont to be in all the acute sayings of those that are wise and good) to excite and stir up the minds of slothful men to the practice of virtue; that there is in a goad to prick the dull ox forward, to draw the plough: nor do they only sting and move the mind for the present; but are apt to stick as fast in the memory, as nails do when they are driven into a board: and to collect also the thoughts, affections, and resolutions unto one certain end; especially when they are fastened by the skilful hand of those who rule the assemblies of God's people; and are ruled themselves by one and the same supreme Governor, whose Holy Spirit directs them all. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*] Therefore, my son (or whosoever thou art that shall read these things, whose happiness I wish as my own), be advised by me, and not only believe these things, but rest contented with such useful knowledge; and do not trouble thyself, either in composing or reading many books: for all that is needful to instruct men how to be happy, may be comprised in a few wise precepts; and if thou extendest thy desires beyond this, thou mayest turn over infinite volumes, which are increasing continually, and serve only to distract thy mind, and tire thy spirits, and impair thy health; but yield little profit, after the expense of a great deal of pains and time. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 13. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*] Let us draw up all, then, that can be said in this matter, into as small a compass as is possible; if thou wouldest be happy, preserve in thy mind such an awful sense of God, as to have a greater regard to him, both as thy creator and governor, and as thy judge, than to any thing in this world; and dreading his displeasure, not only worship him religiously, but observe all his commandments: for, as unto this all men are bound, so in this consists all their duty, and their whole happiness; and therefore they ought to make this their main business, and employ their best endeavours in it. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 14. *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*] As they would with all seriousness, did they but believe and remember what is most certainly true, that, though now the wicked and the good sometimes fare alike, yet there will be a notorious distinction one day made between them; when God (whose knowledge nothing can escape, and out of whose memory nothing can slip) will pass an exact sentence upon every thing we do here in this world, though never so secret and known to none but himself: and then no evil thing, though only designed, and never actually committed, shall go unpunished; and no good thing, though only heartily intended for want of power to accomplish it, shall be unrewarded. See Annot. [*o*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. From the consideration of what he had said in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, *that youth is attended with folly, and folly attended with destruction* (as Greg. Thaumaturgus excellently explains those words), he begins this with the most weighty lesson: which ought to be perpetually inculcated, and beaten into the mind and memory of young men; *viz.* that they would reflect so far as to consider who gave them their being; and what, upon that account, they owe unto him: who, as he is the sole author of all things that give us any delight; so he is of all the abilities and faculties which make us capable to take pleasure in them: and the sole disposer, likewise, of all opportunities that bring us and those delights together.

All this may well be comprehended in the word *Creator;* (if this place be compared with Isa. xl. 28. xlv. 7. 18. lxv. 17, 18.) which being in the Hebrew a word of the plural number, some from thence draw the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which I cannot certainly say is here intended, because it is very ordinary in the Scripture to put the plural for the singular; especially when God is spoken of. Thus when the Israelites had made the golden calf, they say, *These are thy gods, O Israel,* &c. (so we translate it, Exod. xxxii. 4.) as if there had been more gods than one in that calf. But it should be translated, *This is thy god, O Israel;* as appears by what follows, *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt:* signifying they worshipped in this image him, who had wrought that great deliverance for them. And thus Jonathan there understands it; and Theodoret upon the first book of Kings, quest. 10.

More places, like to this, are observed by Bochartus, (lib. ii. de Animal. Sacr. cap. 34. par. i.) in whom the learned reader may find many such Latin words, that are only of the plural, not singular number. And I will only mention one remarkable, (which he might have added, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9.) where the woman says, she saw gods ascending out of the earth: and Saul thereupon asks her, *What form is he of?* understanding she saw a single person.

But whatever becomes of this, we Christians (to whom this mystery is now plainly revealed) ought, when we read such places as these, to think of the obligations we have unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, into whose name we are baptized. And not only to *consider* such things as are abovementioned; but to be *moved* and *affected* with them (for that is here included in

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the word *remember*), according unto their weight and importance.

And to do this betime, the first thing we do; because *the days of our youth* are our best and choicest days (as the word in the Hebrew signifies; whence in 2 Sam. vi. 8. where David is said to gather all the *chosen men*, the LXX. hath νεανίαν, the *young men* in Israel), in which we are apt to take the greatest delight in ourselves, or in any thing truly delightful: our spirits being then most fresh, lively, and vigorous. So that the measure of our delight, whether in ourselves or in any thing without us, being then truly taken, it would constrain us unto an equal delight in him, who is the author of both, and unto a correspondent gratulation for them. Whereas, if we defer this *remembrance* till old age come upon us, when life grows a burden, and the wonted delights of it are either irksome or insipid (unpleasant, or without all taste or relish), our thankfulness for them will be but faint; our gratulation worthless; our devotion cold and lumpish: as Dr. Jackson excellently glosses upon these words, (book xi. upon the Creed, chap. 33.) Which he had expressed long before, more briefly, in his treatise of Faith, chap. 8. p. 125. thus: "The inventory of what we have received from God in our creation, should be taken in those days wherein we most delight; because then the characters of his blessings bestowed upon us, and their true worth, are most fresh and sensible in all our faculties: well knowing, that if we defer this survey till old age, in which life itself becomes a burden, our return of thanks for fruition of it, and the unpleasant appurtenances, will be but wearyish." And plainer still in his second book upon God's Attributes, chap. 11. p. 95. "Then the prints of God's creative power are most fresh in our nature; and might transmit a fairer copy, and truer estimate of the Creator's goodness unto old age, than old age can take any," &c. Which I have repeated the oftener, in several forms of speech, in hope that one or other of them may touch the heart of young men, and excite them by frequent reflection upon the present comforts of health and strength, upon the activity of their body, the quickness of their sense and spirit, to engross them deeply in their memory; *before the evil days come.*

So Solomon calls our decrepit old age: both because they are void of all pleasure, as he saith in the following words; and because they are attended likewise with so many inconveniences and miseries, that it is hard to number them. But he gives us some account of them, in his admirable description of decrepit age, (ver. 2—6.) which abundantly confirms that speech of Cicero in his book de Senectute, that old age proves so odious unto most men, "ut onus se Ætna gravius dicant sustinere," *that they complain of a load that lies heavier than Mount Ætna upon them.*

[*b*] Ver. 2. These infirmities he demonstrates to be very great, because decrepit age consists in the universal decay of the whole frame of nature: which I take to be the meaning of the *sun, the light, the moon, and stars,* being darkened. For as, in a body-politic, the extinction or falling down of these signifies, in the prophetical language, the subversion of that frame of government; (as, to omit abundance of other places, may be seen in what Isaiah saith concerning Babylon, xiii. 10. and Ezekiel concerning Egypt, xxxii. 7, 8.) so the darkening of these in the natural body of man, signifies, in my judgment, its total decay and nearness to a dissolution: the tumbling (as we speak) of an old man into his grave; like a ruinous old house which can stand no longer: for so the metaphor is carried on, (ver. 3.)

And then the *return of clouds after the rain,* refers to the dismal condition a man is in at that time: when one trouble treads upon the heels of another; which is no sooner gone, but the like, or a new one, comes in its room. And so the words may be translated, *The clouds return, and after that the rain:* that is, there is a succession of misery, of grief, pain, or weakness, drawing on one another.

There are some who apply the darkening of *sun, moon, and stars,* to the mind of man (as one would think, indeed, he should say something of that; and all the following description belonging wholly to the body, we must find it here or not at all); but still I conceive that he intends only, in general, to signify the failing of the mind in all its faculties and powers; without a respect to some particular distinct faculty in each of these words. But they who think the inward powers are here intended, are not content to rest in such a general meaning; but will have something in particular signified, by every one of them. And then they do but guess, which gives me the liberty to interpose my conjectures also: that by the *sun* may be meant the soul itself; by the *light,* its understanding; by the *moon,* the will; by the *stars,* all the notions in the mind and memory, with all the affections and passions in the will; just as *sun, moon,* and *stars,* in Joseph's dream, signified his *father,* and *mother,* and *brethren.* And so the sense of this verse is, the mind of man grows feeble in all its powers; the understanding dim-sighted; the memory forgetful; the reason weak and childish (giving such a feeble light, that it can neither direct ourselves nor others); the will listless in all its desires, dull about our greatest concerns, wavering and inconstant in all its resolutions, &c.

But I judge it more reasonable, as I said, to rest in the interpretation first mentioned (which I am sure is agreeable to the holy language in other places); that hereby is only represented, in general, the universal decay of the faculties of the upper part of man, his soul. Which sense I have comprehended together with the other in my Paraphrase: and not neglected this, in which others acquiesce, that these words signify *the miseries an old man feels, both night and day.* As for those who hereby understand the dimness of the eyes, it being expressed afterward, (ver. 3.) I have taken notice of their sense: but another there is, which is worth mentioning. For the meaning may be, *there is nothing but darkness, i. e.* a most uncomfortable condition; like that, when the heavens are clouded day and night, (as they were in St. Paul's voyage, Acts xxvii. 20.) and when one cloud hath spent itself in the tempest, another immediately succeeds it.

[*c*] Ver. 3. As in the foregoing verse he gave a general description of the decay of the whole body (and of the internal faculties of the mind together therewith), so here he enters into the particulars. And conceiving the body to be like a house or tabernacle (unto which it is frequently compared, not only in the Scripture, but all other authors), he resembles the shoulders, arms, and hands, to the *keepers of the house:* because by them we defend ourselves from dangers; administer both food and physic; exercise all manner of arts and manufactures (as we call them), as long

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as they have any strength remaining in them. Which old age takes away, the nerves, tendons, and ligaments so flagging, that these *keepers* quiver and shake (*tremble* we render it), and grow so useless, that we can no way help ourselves or others with them.

And then he compares the thighs, legs, and feet, to *strong men:* they being the supporters and pillars, as it were, of the whole fabric, which hold it up; till old age quite disables them for this office, and makes the knees *bend* under the burden of the body alone.

The reason of which follows; in that the *grinders fail*, &c. in which metaphor he compares the *teeth* in the jaws, above and below, to the upper and nether millstone. For they, by cutting, breaking, and chewing of the meat, prepare it to be dissolved in the stomach, and turned into nourishment (as the corn is ground between those stones into meal, and so prepared for making bread, and other such-like uses); but in time drop out of their sockets, or are broken, so that they can grind no longer.

And the like decay we find in the sight of the eyes; which he means by *those that look out of the windows.* All those *coats, humours, and nerves,* that make up the eyes: which are set in two *holes* (as the word is), or *hollow places* in the forehead (like the windows in the house), and have a round hole also in the midst of them, called the *pupil* of the eye (like a casement), through which all things are transmitted to the inward sense of seeing. Until the *skins,* and the *humours* also, grow too thick; and the very figure of the eye, as some have observed, be changed, by the dryness of the crystalline humour: and then the house is *darkened.* Aristotle, in his Problems, (sect. 31. quæst. 14.) expresses it thus, in short, οἱ πρεσβύται οὐκ ὀξὺ ὁρῶσι, καὶ γὰρ τῶν γερόντων σκληρόδερμα, &c. *when men grow into years, their sight grows dull; because, in the eyes of old men, the skin is both hard and also rugged, so that their sight is obscured.*

[*d*] Ver. 4. This verse hath a greater difficulty in it, especially in the beginning; *And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low.* But the LXX. suggest an unexceptionable sense of this passage, in my opinion, which is, that *they are shut out of all public meetings, because of the lowness of their voice, which formerly was as loud as a mill.* And there is little reason to doubt, but by *doors* are meant the lips (it being a frequent expression in Scripture), and by the *lowness of the sound of grinding,* the lowness of the voice, from the loss of teeth, or the weakness of respiration; in short, from the defect there is in the organs of speech.

Nor do I see why Maldonate's translation may not be allowed, which is still more simple (and therefore I have taken notice of it in my Paraphrase); *The lips are shut without* (so בשוק may be translated *foris, extrinsecus),* that is, they sink and are compressed; *when the voice grows weak and tremulous, because of those that grind;* that is, by the falling of the teeth. Thus he. But it may more exactly be translated thus, *by the falling low of the voice, of which the teeth are principal instruments.* And the whole, I have sometimes thought, may not incongruously be translated in this manner: *His lips are shut in his mouth* (for the mouth is the *street* or highway into this house of which Solomon is speaking) *by the falling down of the voice of grinding;* i. e. the voice that is made by grinding the air, as it were, between the teeth and the roof of the mouth, &c.

It might be referred *to the eating meat, seldom, because of his bad digestion* (the meat being ground in the stomach as in a mill), if the word *voice* or *sound* would agree to this. Which renders Dr. Smith's interpretation very difficult, in my judgment: who by *doors* understands all the *inlets* and *outlets* of the body; and by *streets,* the open ways and passages in the body; in which the matter of nourishment is conveyed, and passeth, without let or molestation: and by *shutting* these doors, the ceasing from their use: and by *grinding,* the digestions and concoctions in the stomach, bowels, mesentery, glandules, &c. (all which is well enough, though, perhaps, too philosophical): and by the *voice* of these concoctions, the natural symptoms, significative of digestions; all those indications which demonstrate the work of nature is to proceed aright. Which seems to me very far fetched, and too great a straining of the word *voice* or *sound:* however, I have here mentioned it, that they who are pleased with it may follow that interpretation, which is very ingenious.

The next passage in this verse is easier; though it is uncertain whether he mean that the *chirping of the least bird* wakes him; or that he wakes early, when the birds do. For *tzippor* signifies all kind of birds, great and small; and may be interpreted of the *cock,* as well as any other: and the meaning be, *he gets up at the cock-crowing.* This last seems most probable, because, being thick of hearing (as the next passage signifies), it cannot be supposed that the least noise disturbs him. Though I confess the meaning may be, that a *small noise wakes him sooner, than thunder would have done in his young days.*

The daughters of music, if it refer to the parts of the body, I take not to be those organs of it which made music; but which receive it, being made. For the Hebrews call that the *son* of a thing, which is fitted or designed for that of which it is said to be the son. Thus an *arrow* is called *the son of the bow,* or quiver, (Isa. xli. 19. Lam. iii. 13.) and *wheat* called the *son of the thrashing-floor;* (Isa. xxi. 18.) and so the *daughters of music* may be those parts where music is entertained. Yet there is one objection against this, which lies in the word *all:* which cannot properly be applied to the ears; because there are but two of them: and we never say *all the ears,* but *both the ears.* Which makes some think, that hereby we are rather to understand all sorts of music, which are made either by instruments or voice. But to these it may be answered, that the word *all* refers to the several parts of the ear, in which the sound is formed: both the winding channels in the outward part, and the tympanum, and the three cavities, and as many little bones in the inward part, together with the auditory nerve itself. All which are manifestly contrived on purpose to receive sounds: which are born here, and so may be called their *daughters:* which in youth are brisk and sprightly; but are humbled (as the LXX. translate it) and flat in old age.

There is no necessity, I acknowledge, of interpreting this passage thus (though it seem most agreeable to the rest of the description), because it may be translated, *the daughters of a song:* that is, singing-women *are not valued at all* by old men: they account them nothing worth; and would not give, as we say, a farthing for them. Old Barzillai confesses this imperfection, 2 Sam. xix. 35. which place, St. Jerome thinks, may very well explain this.

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[e] Ver. 5. And it is attended with a greater, which is the passion of *fear:* unto which old age is very subject, from defect of spirits, weakness of imagination, as well as of bodily organs; which are unable to resist any dangers; which old men also are apt to apprehend greater than they really are. For as their heads turn giddy, if they ascend to any high place, so they tremble, in the plain way; for fear of a stone, a clod, a hole, any unevenness, by the rising or depression of the earth (for so Grotius thinks the words may be expounded, though the ancient interpreters do not favour it, *He is afraid to stumble at the rising or falling of the earth);* or he fears he may be pushed down by others, if he do not fall of himself; in a word, he knows not what he may meet withal, and therefore fears.

Or it may be expounded, as Maldonate takes it, *He never thinks himself safe, though he be in a high fortress.* Or, dreads a high wall, though never so firm, lest it should fall upon him. There are some that expound the first words of this verse thus, *He is afraid of spirits,* and separate souls: of those excellent beings which dwell in the regions above. That is, *he is superstitious;* which I look upon as forced.

The next part of this description, which we translate *almond-tree flourish,* most interpreters take for his *head growing hoary,* or *white,* like the blossoms of the almond-tree. Which though it make an old man look venerable, yet brings the tidings of approaching death: and is as certain an indication of it, as the almond-tree's blossoming is of the spring; or (as others will have it) of its speedy production of fruit: for it flowered, they say, in February, and showed its fruit in March; and thence had the name of *shached* in Hebrew; from its forward blooming, and hasty ripening into fruit. And, to strengthen this interpretation, some have observed that an *almond* was anciently called by the Greeks κάρηνον, that is, *the head:* from some resemblance which that fruit had to it. What that resemblance should be, I do not understand; unless it be in the figure of the brain: which, the skull being removed, appears like the shell of the almond, when the husk, wherein it is enclosed, is peeled away. From thence Herodianus of Alexandria (as I find in Athenæus, lib. ii. cap. 12.) derives the common Greek word Ἀμυγδάλη for an almond; because next to the green rind, ὡσπερεὶ ἀμυχὰς ἔχει πολλὰς, *it hath, as it were, a great many clefts,* and looks as if it were scarified.

I see no apter interpretation than this, unless it be that which I shall mention below (when I have explained the rest of this verse), or we understand it, as St. Jerome saith some did, of the *huckle-bone;* which, by the wasting away of the flesh of the buttocks, appears, nay thrusts out itself; and makes their very sitting or lying down uneasy to them. And I find an Arabic word of this sound, which signifies a kind of boat; and may possibly be the original of the Latin word *scapha.*

And this would agree well with the next words, *the grasshopper shall be a burden;* which seem to be a description of his stooping under the burden of old age; his shoulders, hips, and back, all bunching out; which is a load great enough for him, without any other. In short, *he can scarce bear himself,* as Melancthon expounds it: which Avenarius thinks is a literal translation of the words, the *grasshopper* (or *locust*) *shall burden itself;* that is, saith he, his *gibbous back.* Which is better than their gloss, who made it to signify, he can scarce bear the weight of a grasshopper or locust. The LXX. translate it, *the locust shall be made fat; i. e.* swell, bunch out, or be burdensome: which aptly denotes the *knotting of the joints* (like those of the locust), and the rising up of the vertebræ (or any such thing in the body of man), which make his back resemble that of a locust. And so Jo. Forsterus excellently translates it, "Ut in curvo incedat dorso, sicut cicada;" *that he goes crooked in the back, like a grasshopper.* Luther, also, had this in his mind (though he did not fully explain it) when he thus glossed upon these words: *Such an old man is like a locust: for his bones stick out, and his body is shrunk up; so that he is a mere image of death.*

And then the next signifies no more than this, That the greatest bodily pleasures fail; and the member that serves those pleasures is relaxed and flags. For the word *haavijonah* (which we translate *desire*) signifies either the *fruit* of a shrub, which the LXX. take to be *capers* (though *avjonath* signifies the berries of laurels, myrtles, and, indeed, of all the lesser sort of trees), or that *desire* which it is supposed (according to Avicenna) to excite; or that *knob* in us, which something resembles that fruit.

There is one interpretation of these three last clauses which seems to me not at all constrained, but apt enough (only it doth not make all relate to the parts of the body, as the rest do), which is that of De Dieu; from whom Junius before him did not much differ. It is this, *Though the almond-tree flourish, and the locust be ladened with fat* (*i. e.* though the pleasures of the spring appear and come on apace, making all things else to swell with joy), *it doth not invigorate his blood, nor make it rise, to stir up his desire,* &c.

The reason is, he is just upon the point of leaving all things here, and going to his *long home.* Which signifies either the place to which all men go (*domum seculi, the house of the whole world,* whither all mankind have ever gone, and must go), or the place from whence he came; as Forsterus expounds *domum seculi sui, his old house,* out of which he first came forth; (thus we translate the word *olam,* Jer. vi. 16.) or that where they must long abide, even till the resurrection of the dead.

For their friends there leave them; and can do nothing more but mourn for them: as it follows here, *the mourners go about the streets.* That is, are preparing for the funeral, ready to accompany the hearse: or, they already bewail him as a dead corpse, rather than a living man: or, when he is dead, can only give him a solemn funeral, and openly bewail him; not only at home, but in the streets. For which purpose they sometimes hired mourning-men and women; who are the *minstrels* we read of, Matt. ix. 23. For Josephus saith (lib. iii. cap. 15. of the Wars of the Jews), that when Joppa was taken, and he reported to be slain, πλείστους μισθοῦσασθαι αὐλητὰς, &c. *there were many minstrels hired at Jerusalem,* who began to make lamentations in a doleful tone. But Gierus, in his treatise of the Mourning of the Hebrews, (p. 320.) thinks Solomon doth not here mean the mourning of those that accompanied the corpse to the grave, nor their walking about in mourning apparel; but the sad lamentations which their grief sometimes moved them to make in the very streets: when they were weary with mourning at home, or put thereby into an extravagant passion; like that which the Jews supposed Mary the sister

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of Lazarus to fall into, when she rose up hastily and went out of the house, (John xi. 31.)

[*f*] Ver. 6. Now we are come to the most difficult verse of all; in which the wise man describes this house as falling down: that is, enumerates the evils which immediately forego death; of which he would have us think frequently, while the house is in good condition: for those words, *Remember thy Creator*, St. Jerome thinks, are here again to be repeated; *or ever*, that is, before death seize on thee, and pull down this earthly tabernacle, and lay it in the dust.

First, *by loosening the silver cord.* Which some fancy signifies all the *humours of the body;* which are, as it were, *the thread of life;* which the destinies were said to spin out, for a certain time, and then cut off: others understand by it, *the string of the tongue:* and Gasper Sanctius, (upon Cant. vii. 5.) the *urine;* whose stream, he fancies, resembles a silver thread, which is then broken, when it distils by drops, as it frequently doth in old men. But the best of the Hebrew writers by this cord understand the *spinal marrow* (that is, the pith of the backbone); others, the *nerves;* others, the outward *coats* of the nerves, &c. And there is little reason to doubt but the marrow down the back continued from the brain, as it were, in a string or cord, unto the very bottom of it; together with the nerves arising from it; and the filaments, fibres, and tendons, that proceed from them, are the thing here intended. Which Melancthon saw long ago: *the nerves* (saith he) *and ligaments are here meant;* which have literally the power of *cords*, both to unite and tie together, and also draw. But nobody, that I know of, hath explained this so well as our Dr. Smith (in his Γηροκομία Βασιλική), who hath also solved that doubt, why they are expressed in the singular number; because, though there be many of them, yet they are the continuation of one and the same thing (the *fibres* being nothing else but the nerves divided and dispersed; and the *nerves* nothing else but the marrow in like manner separated, as so many arms and branches of the same tree); they are all one in their *original*, the brain; they are all one in their *continuation*, for a long space in the spine; all one in their use, to convey the animal spirits, and to be the instruments of motion.

This cord is called *silver*, because of its colour; being not only white, but also shining bright and resplendent; and that when it is taken out of the body, after death. I omit other reasons.

It is *loosened* (shrunk up, or contracted, or removed, as others translate it) when it is no longer full of spirits: and so the body becomes void of sense and motion, either in part or in whole.

The second step to a dissolution is by breaking *the golden bowl:* and as the former related to the rivulets, as one may say, of sense and motion, so this to the fountain, *viz.* the head, and all contained in it: the membranes, for instance, especially that which the ancients, from the great esteem and reverence they had for it, called *Pia mater.* Which is that part which, deeply insinuating itself into all the anfractuous passages of the brain (as Dr. Smith speaks), and being firmly annexed thereunto, keeps every part thereof in its proper place, and due texture: so that whatsoever is performed within the whole compass of the brain (whether the making animal spirits, their exercise therein, or their distribution therefrom), is principally done by the help of this membrane. Which therefore may be called *gullath;* that part of the head which is the *spring* of all the motion that comes from thence. And so we translate the plural of this word, Josh. xv. 19. and both Forsterus and Avenarius understand the singular here.

And it is called *golden* bowl (like that, Zech. iv. 2, 3. from whence the oil was conveyed by pipes unto the lamps), for such reasons as gave the other the name of *silver* cord. For instance, in respect of the colour, not only because that most precious and deep-coloured liquor of life is abundantly contained in the vessels of this membrane, but chiefly because the membrane itself is somewhat of a yellowish colour, and tends more towards that of gold than any other part whatsoever doth. But especially in respect of its excellency and universal use: for it being the instrument that doth depurate the best of blood, clarifies and exalts the vital spirits, and so prepares them for animality (as they speak), to what should it be likened, but to that most perfect, best concocted, and most exalted mineral of gold?

Now the *breaking* of this bowl is its losing its use; not being able to retain its liquors (as a bowl is useless when it is broken); or, as Dr. Smith explains it, in the extremity of extreme old age, it can no longer continue its continuity; but by reason either of its natural dryness, shrivelling into itself, or of preternatural moisture, imbibing excrementitious humours, till it be overfull; it ofttimes snaps asunder, and so recurs (*i. e.* runs back, as the Hebrew word signifies) into itself; from whence the brain must necessarily subside, and all the part serving unto animal motion be suddenly and irrecoverably dashed in pieces. So Avenarius judiciously translates this passage, *That yellow membrane which contains the brain be trodden down.*

The third step is, the *breaking of the pitcher at the fountain.* Which is variously interpreted; some understanding hereby, the inability of the bladder to retain the urine; others by *fountain* understand the *liver;* and by the *pitcher*, the *bladder of gall;* or the *veins;* which is the most common opinion. But Dr. Smith rather takes it for the *heart:* which is indeed the *fountain of life;* and hath two distinct cavities, the *right* and the *left:* out of which proceed those *veins* and those *arteries* which carry the blood through the whole body, and bring it back again to the heart, in a perpetual circulation.

And if by *pitcher* we understand the veins, which are the *receptacle* of the blood, (and the Hebrew word signifies any *containing vessel*, particularly the widow's *barrel* in which was her meal, 1 Kings xvii. 14. 16. as well as a *barrel of water* in the next chapter, xviii. 33.) then by the *fountain* must be peculiarly understood the *right ventricle* of the heart, which is the original from whence the veins have their rise. For so the Hebrew word signifies, not only a *fountain*, but a *spring;* from which waters bubble up and burst forth (as we translate it, Isa. xxx. 7. xlix. 10.) in a running stream: and therefore is so to be translated here, the *spring* or *original, viz.* of the veins which proceed from thence. Which induced commentators to take the *fountain* here for the liver; which they would not have done, had they understood, as we do now, that the veins do not arise from thence as their first original; but from the right ventricle of the heart. And they are spoken of in the singular

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number (as the nerves were before), because they are all of one and the same nature, original, and use.

Now the *breaking* of this pitcher into shivers (as the Hebrew word signifies) is the utter failing of the veins; their ceasing quite from their natural action and use. When they can no longer carry back, nor conveniently convey unto the heart that liquor which they properly contain: but the little blood which remains in the cold body of man near his end is congealed, and stagnates in his veins.

And so I proceed to the last thing, *the wheel broken at the cistern.* Where by the *wheel* some understand the *lungs;* which, by their continual motion, do thrust out the breath from them, and draw it in again to them: resembling the *wheel of a well,* now drawing up the bucket to itself, anon letting it down again into the well. Melancthon, by *cistern* understanding the *stomach* (the word signifying, saith he, a profound cavity), takes the *wheel* for the *guts* adjoining thereunto, which are wrapped about one another in a kind of circular form; and make the *mesentery* look like a wheel. Which Grotius seems also to have had in his mind. But, taking it for granted, that a *wheel,* being an instrument of circulation, is the hieroglyphic of something that goes, and makes a round in us, I think Dr. Smith's conjecture is most probable; that hereby is meant the great artery with all its branches: which is the great instrument of rotation or circulation in the body of man; and so evidently thrusts the blood forward, that we perceive its pulses forcing the blood along its cavity, in the wrists, the temples, and other parts of the body. Without which instrument to compel it, the blood that naturally tends home to the heart would go no farther.

And then the *cistern* from whence this wheel forces the liquor, and conveys it through all the parts, is the *left ventricle of the heart:* to which this great artery is annexed, and from whence it ariseth. For a *cistern* is a vessel made on purpose to receive a due proportion of water, and to keep it till the time of use, and then conveniently to pass it into vessels that are prepared to receive it from thence. And such is the left ventricle of the heart; which in its *diastole,* as they call it, receives the blood that is brought into it from the lungs; and then, keeping it there a little, doth in its *systole* pass due proportions thereof into the great artery, to be dispensed as was said before. And, for this end, there are little valves, or falling doors, placed at the entrance and at the going out of this cistern, which are like cocks, to let in and to let out; and, by their opening or shutting, give convenient passage or stoppage to the liquor, which continually runs that way.

And so the *breaking* or *shaking in pieces* (as Forsterus translates the word) of this wheel, is the ceasing of the pulse; so he in another place translates it, *trodden down,* i. e. *suppressed* by the decay of the instruments of pulsation, which can no longer perform that work. Which being absolutely necessary for the preservation of life, the ceasing of it is death.

[*g*] Ver. 7. And so the *body,* made of a mouldering substance, being no longer a fit habitation for the spirit (and therefore deserted by it), which held the parts of it together, shall crumble again into the earth, out of which it originally came, according to that sentence passed upon Adam in the beginning: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,* (Gen. iii. 19.) This body was no better in its first principles: and though now we are very fond of it, as if it were some goodly thing, yet, when the spirit leaves it, it will appear to be indeed but *dust.*

But the *spirit,* the nobler part of man, being of a higher original, shall return to God, who sent it into the body, to be disposed of by him, according to the sentence that he should pass upon it. For the Chaldee paraphrase's explication of the latter part of this verse is very apposite: *It shall return, that it may stand in judgment before God.* For *Elohim* (the word here for *God*), in the Hebrew language, signifies a *judge.* As in the place abovementioned, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. There is a sentence not much unlike to this, I have observed in Plutarch's Consolatory Discourse to Apollonius upon the death of his son: where he alleges, amongst a great many others, this saying of Epicharmus, Συνεκρίθη καὶ διεκρίθη, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὅθεν ἦλθε πάλιν, γᾶ μὲν εἰς γὰν, πνεῦμα δ' ἄνω.

[*h*] Ver. 8. And now having thus demonstrated his first proposition, he elegantly repeats the *exordium,* or entrance of his book, as is here observed by St. Jerome, whose words are so significant, that I cannot but translate them; as an excellent gloss upon this verse: *For since all the labour of mortal man (of which Solomon hath disputed in this whole book) amounts to this, That the dust returns to its earth, and the soul returns thither from whence it was taken: it is an excess of vanity to labour for this world; and to gather nothing for the future:* where he is to live for ever, and to be judged according to his behaviour here.

This only may be added, that here he enters upon the conclusion of his discourse; and divides it into two parts, as he had done the foregoing book. First, he sums up what he had said in the six first chapters, concerning the *false ways* men take to happiness, in this verse: which he backs by several serious considerations, in those that follow, unto ver. 13. Where, secondly, he sums up what he had said from chap. vii. to this place, concerning the *true way* to happiness; which lies only in a due regard to God and his commandments.

[*i*] Ver. 9. The first word of this verse is variously translated: and the whole verse applied by interpreters, either to confirm what was said before concerning the false methods men take to happiness (as if he had said,—I have done when I have told you, that you may believe me; who am sufficiently able to inform you, and not think to meet with better information, from other men's writings, or from your own experience), or as an introduction to what he intends to say, (ver. 13, 14.) concerning the right method to be happy. Which he prepares the reader to attend unto, and receive into his mind: first, by asserting his own great authority in this verse (who the wiser he was, the more desirous he was both to teach and to learn). And then, the weighty doctrine which he taught, (ver. 10.) and the great usefulness of it; (ver. 11.) the like to which they would find no where else, (ver. 12.) It is not very material which of these ways we take; but I have had respect to both, in my Paraphrase: where I have expressed the sense so fully, that I cannot think fit to enlarge any farther upon this verse. But only note, that Luther, and he alone, I think, expounds the first words thus (not absurdly, nor disagreeing with the Hebrew text): *There remained nothing to the Preacher, but that he was wise,* &c. He understood and taught aright, and took a great deal of pains; which was

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a great satisfaction to himself, but he saw little or no success of it in others, who would not be governed by his advice, &c.

[*k*] Ver. 10. This verse runs thus, word for word, in the Hebrew, *The Preacher carefully sought to meet with desirable words; and the writing of uprightness; and the words of truth.* Where *writing* may refer both to what he read in others, whether Divine or human authors; and to what he wrote himself (and so I have expounded it in the Paraphrase), which he commends from three heads, *pleasure*, or delight, *usefulness*, and *certainty*.

Some fancy that Solomon wrote a book called *Catub Jascher (the writing of uprightness)*, or *Jascher dibre emeth (the upright words of truth)*: of which, as there is no certainty, so I see no probable grounds to assert it. Only we know he wrote a great many more books than we have, (1 Kings iv. 32, 33. 2 Chron. xxxv. 4. and see Josephus, lib. viii. Antiq. cap. 2.)

[*l*] Ver. 11. Some connect this with the foregoing verse in this manner, *The Preacher sought to find out the words of the wise*, &c. And so the words run exactly in the Hebrew. But we may take this verse by itself, supplying the word *are*, as we do in our translation; and look upon it as a commendation of these wise words: which doth not in the least alter the sense. I have had respect to both; and comprehended also, in my Paraphrase, two of the interpretations which one difficult phrase is capable of; *viz. masters of the assemblies.*

Which may be translated divers ways, more literally out of the Hebrew than we do; who add the word *by* before them, which is not in the original. For the last words, which we translate *masters of assemblies*, may be attributed to *nails*, in this manner: *As nails fastened, whereby things are joined together (nails* being the instruments of gathering or bringing those things together, which were separate); or thus, retaining the words of our translation, *the masters of assemblies are as fixed nails:* or the *masters of collections*, such judicious authors as make excellent collections of apophthegms and smart sayings, *stick in the mind as nails do in planks.* Or the *principal*, the choice *collections, viz.* of wise men (mentioned in the beginning of the verse), *are as*, &c. or it may, in the same sense, be connected (not with nails, but) with the words following; the *masters*, or *authors, that collect wise and pithy sayings, have their gifts from one and the same shepherd.*

So ungrounded is the fancy of Grotius; who from hence conjectures, that there were several persons appointed by Zerubbabel (whom he takes for this *one pastor*) to collect the sentences of this book, and put them out under the name of Solomon. Who, himself, may rather be thought to be this *one pastor*, or *king:* who employed (if we interpret the words this way) many persons to make collections: of which he afterward made use as he saw cause.

This seems to be certain, that he here gives the reason of this concise and sententious way of writing: because such acute sayings, not only stir up and quicken slothful minds for the present (as a goad stimulates the dull ox to labour), but penetrate deep, and stick fast in the memory; collecting also the thoughts, affections, and resolution, to one certain point or scope, and gathering together a great deal of sense into a few words. As those words, *baale a syppoth, masters of assemblies*, or *authors of collections*, may, I have sometimes thought, be understood. Such a collector was that great man Julius Cæsar, who gathered a book of apophthegms; and shewed by that, he thought it more honourable unto him, if he changed himself, as it were, into *tables* and *codicils*, in which the prudent and grave sayings of others were registered, than to have his own words hallowed like oracles, as some vain princes, corrupted by flattery, have affected. Though divers of his own speeches, as the Lord Bacon observes, (lib. i. de Augm. Scient. cap. 7.) are truly, such as those which Solomon here describes, full of vigour and efficacy; insomuch, that by one word alone he appeased a mutiny in his army.

But, after all that may be said on this subject, since I find not only the Vulgar, but the LXX. making out the sense by adding the word *per* and παρὰ (as we do the word *by* in our translation), before *masters of assemblies;* I have in the Paraphrase followed that interpretation also.

[*m*] Ver. 12. And in this verse have adhered to the same translation, which understands the first words, as if he had said, Beyond these things do not trouble thyself. For so they may be translated exactly, *And what is above, or more than them* (that is, *the words of the wise*, beforementioned), *my son, be warned, or be enlightened:* observe these well, and trouble thyself no farther. Be content with a few good precepts of the wise, and do not involve thyself in many books. For what is necessary may be learnt, without much labour, out of a short book: if men will be wiser than they need, they will but trouble themselves to no purpose. There being no certainty of most things; no satisfaction when we go beyond the known or acknowledged principle and precepts of virtue: but what one man asserts, another confutes; and when we think we have written excellently, another writer starts up and discovers abundance of errors: and so volumes are multiplied without end; and we are led into long disquisitions, without any satisfaction to the mind, but with much weariness to the body, and great loss of precious time; which had better be spent in digesting and practising such short, useful, and necessary instructions as these.

He doth not absolutely condemn many books, for there are not a few of the Divine writings, and about the same thing: but books about needless things, and that dilate too much upon things necessary; rather tiring, than instructing. And he condemns the levity of those that are always reading, but never meditating: running over such a book as this presently, and then going to another not so profitable, and never returning to this again.

So I take it in short, *Content thyself with this book, and such-like; and do not turn over many authors, to learn how to be happy.* For goodness and truth are included in certain bounds; but wickedness and lies, *sine fine sunt, are without end*, as St. Jerome here notes. Who observes also, that, perhaps, he adviseth us to study brevity; and to mind the sense more than the words: directly contrary to the philosophers and doctors of the world, who, to assert their false opinions, used abundance and great variety of words; but the Divine Scripture, *brevi circulo coarctata est, is confined to a small circle;* and as much contracted in words, as it is dilated in sense.

The Hebrew word *bahag*, which we translate *study*, Aben Ezra says, in the neighbouring languages, signifies *reading;* and so we translate it in the margin.

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[*n*] Ver. 13. To teach us to contract our labours into as small a compass as we can, he sums up, in a few words, the sense of his whole discourse in this book; which he calls *the conclusion or end of the matter;* of all that can be said on this subject: the whole sense of the sermon succinctly delivered; unto which, therefore, every one should confine his endeavours. It is this,—to work his soul unto such a due regard of the Divine Majesty (standing in awe of him as his Lord, overseer, and judge), that he take care to observe all his commandments: without which all religion is vain and fruitless.

And these two things (the *fear of God,* or devotion and *obedience)* he commends from two arguments: the first of which is in this verse; that they are things which concern all mankind, one as well as another; of which if they be careful, they have done enough to make themselves immortally happy.

For those words, *this is the whole,* or *the all of man,* may be expounded four several ways: either, this is *all the duty of man,* or the *duty of all men;* or the *whole happiness of all men;* or *their whole business;* unto which therefore they should devote their *whole selves;* that is, all their strength. For, according as St. Jerome understands it, *to this man was born: That he understanding God is his Creator should worship him with fear and honour, and observance of his commands.*

And the *fear of God* being implanted in our minds, we shall not fail to worship him, and call upon him, and expect all good things from him, and give him thanks for them: and, as the best expression of our thankfulness, *keep his commandments,* and be obedient to all his precepts: both in subduing our sinful appetites and passions, and in exercising charity towards our neighbours. Which will make us true in word and deed; faithful in all our contracts; liberal to the poor; observant of our governors; in short, make us observe all the directions of this book, in order to our happiness.

[*o*] Ver. 14. Here is the second argument, why we should seriously intend these things; because the Lord and Judge of the world will one day call us to an account for what we do here; and pass an impartial sentence upon every action of our life, even *against every secret* (as some expound these words, *al col alam),* or upon all secret as well as open actions. Which are all known to him, though now he seem to take no notice of them; and shall then not only be brought to light, but with an apparent distinction between good and evil: the difference of which shall be certainly and notoriously manifested; by the severe punishment of the one, and the bountiful remuneration of the other.

I will imitate therefore (saith Melancthon) the example of Solomon; and, in the conclusion, recite the sum of this book. "He intended to assert Divine providence, and to refute the objections against it: which are these; There are great confusions in human life; a vast multitude of ungodly men, and but few that acknowledge and fear God: and, which is worse, the wicked flourish in honour and riches; but the pious are afflicted, and ofttimes killed by the worst of men, &c. therefore all things seem to be carried by chance. Unto which Solomon answers; Though, for the most part, such be the confusion of things, yet be thou ruled by God's word, and hold the opinion of his providence with a firm faith. Do not fall from God, because of these scandals; nor cast away his fear, or thy confidence in him, nor desert thy vocation: but oppose these two things to these confusions; There will come a judgment, when God will take away these confusions and make an exact distinction: for the wicked shall be thrown into everlasting punishment; but it shall be well for ever with the righteous. And in this life, also, God moderates these confusions: for he punishes heinous wickedness, supports government, preserves governors, and order, and politics in the world. Nay, this is a testimony of God's presence, that when the infirmity of human nature is so great, and so many are no better than mad and furious, yet God preserves his church." And, I may add, we have such good books as these for our direction into truth, and encouragement in piety.

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THE

SONG OF SOLOMON.

WITH ANNOTATIONS.

PREFACE.

I. THAT this book was composed by Solomon is no more doubted, than that he was the author of the two foregoing.

And that it was always looked upon as a holy book, treating of some spiritual and Divine matter, appears from its being placed among the rest of that kind. Nor hath it been doubted of by any considerable number of men, either among Jews or Christians, but only by a few singular persons; who ought (as Theodoret speaks in his preface to this book) to have looked upon those blessed fathers, who, placing this Song among the Divine writings, took it to be fit for the uses of the church, as men of greater judgment, and more spiritual than themselves. And they ought likewise to have considered (as he adds) that we have, in effect, the testimony of the Holy Ghost itself, for its Divine authority: Ezra, a man excelling in virtue and full of the Holy Spirit, having thought this worthy of a room among those sacred volumes, which he gathered together after their return from the captivity of Babylon.

And, accordingly, a great many holy men have illustrated it (as he farther notes) with their commentaries and interpretations, or have adorned their writings with its sentences: such as Eusebius, Origen, Cyprian, (who wore the crown of martyrdom), καὶ οἱ τούτων παλαιότεροι καὶ τοῦ Ἀποστόλων πλησιέστεροι, *and others that were more ancient than these, and nearer to the times of the apostles.*

It is unnecessary to mention those that followed after in future times, who all took this for a spiritual book: let us only consider, whether, if these things being so, it be reasonable for us to despise so many and such great persons, nay, the Holy Spirit itself, and to follow our own private opinions; nor hearkening to him that said, "The thoughts of mortal man are vain, and our devices are but uncertain:" (Wisd. ix. 14.) or rather of St. Paul, (Rom. i. 21.) "They became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened."

II. Nor doth it seem hard, either to find out what that spiritual matter is, of which the wise man here treats (especially, since all Christian writers have from the beginning applied this Song to Christ and the church), or to give an account of the rise and original of such sublime contemplations, which I take to be this.

The great prophet David having plainly foretold that a far more glorious King than his son Solomon should one day arise, (as we read in the song he made at his marriage, Psal. xlv.) and likewise more expressly prophesied of his Divinity, royal majesty, priesthood, &c. (Psal. cx.) and again resumed this argument, just before his death, when he caused his son Solomon to be crowned and to sit upon his throne, (Psal. lxxii.) it stirred up the longing desires of Solomon after the coming of this most illustrious Prince; and made him study to have, at least, as clear a sight of him, as was possible to be attained afar off. And that he might stir up the same desire in the whole nation, after his appearing, he cast his meditations on this subject into a Song, in the form of a pastoral eclogue: in which several persons being introduced, who speak their parts, it may be called a *dramatic poem.* And so it is styled by St. Greg. Nazianzen, in his thirty-first oration; where he quotes a passage, ἐκ τοῦ νυμφικοῦ δράματός τε καὶ ἄσματος, (as his words are, p. 503. edit. Paris.) *out of this bridal interlude and song.* For a *drama,* as the Greeks teach us, consists in the change of persons, some of which enter; others come to them; others withdraw; till the whole work be completed, by this shifting and alteration of the persons.

Now the persons which compose this Song, are the *bridegroom,* the *bride,* the *virgins* attending on her, and the *youths* attending on him; to whom some add the *sister* of the spouse mentioned chap. viii.; and the *watchmen* and *daughters* of Jerusalem, who are introduced in their turns. For example, first, the bride (and her companions) comes in and saith, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,* &c. Then the bridegroom appears, and saith, (ver. 8.) *If thou knowest not, O thou fairest,* &c. After which he seems to withdraw himself, leaving the bride and her companions alone upon the stage, (while he sits at his repast, ver. 12.) who thus speak to her, *We will make thee borders of gold,* &c. And then she speaks again, ver. 13. and he returns and speaks, ver. 15.

How many parts there are in this *drama* is not agreed. Some make ten; others make but seven *colloquies,* or interlocutory passages, in this sacred *dialogue,* as they call it. About which I do not think fit to dispute; but shall take notice of as many as I can observe, in the Argument or Annotations upon each chapter.

As for the phrase, it is wholly allegorical, in expressions borrowed chiefly from the fields, and woods, and gardens: as I shall shew in their proper places, when we meet with them. And such were the fittest that could be found, supposing he would use poetical words, to set forth the ardent desire he had, and would excite in others (as I said before)

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to have a sight of that great *Shepherd* of the sheep, who would make all the world happy.

III. And none need wonder that he speaks *wholly* of this glorious King: for so doth his father David in the hundred and fifth Psalm, which can be applied to no other person whatsoever; and so doth the prophet Isaiah in aftertimes, in his fifty-third chapter. Which, though some have endeavoured to accommodate first to another person, yet they have failed in their attempt; and never could find any in whom it was so literally fulfilled as in our blessed Saviour. Who alone was there intended; as he seems to me to be here also in this present Song of Solomon's.

Where it need not seem strange neither to any one, that he is compared to a *bridegroom*, and the church to a *bride*, who doth but reflect upon the forty-fifth Psalm; and observe how Solomon doth only follow the metaphor, wherein his father David had represented this mystery: and observe withal, that it is the common language of the prophets, who compare Jerusalem and Zion (under which name is comprehended the whole church of the Jews) to a virgin, called frequently *the virgin-daughter of Zion*, &c. whom God had espoused unto himself.

IV. But, for the fuller explication of this, it may be fit to note, that the profoundest of the Hebrew divines, whom they now call *cabalists*, having such a notion as this among them, that *sensible things are but an imitation of things above*, conceived from thence, that there was (for instance) an original pattern of that love and union, which is between a man and his wife here in this world. This they expressed by the kindness of *Tipheret* to *Malcuth:* which are the names they give unto the invisible bridegroom and bride in the upper world. And this *Tipheret (i. e. beauty* or *ornament)* they call also by the name of the *Adam on high*, and the *Great Adam*, in opposition to the *terrestrial* or *little Adam* here below. As *Malcuth (i. e. kingdom)* they call also by the name of *Cheneseth Israel* (i. e. *congregation of Israel);* who is united, they say, to that *celestial* Adam as Eve was to the *terrestrial*. Which heavenly Adam or *Tipheret* they call likewise the *Sun*, and *Malcuth*, the *Moon;* and make the former an active principle, the latter a passive; or, as their phrase is, *Tipheret* is but the masculine power which influences *Malcuth;* who is but the recipient of those influences. So that, in sum, they seem to say the same that the apostle St. Paul doth, when he tells us, that *marriage is a great mystery; but he speaks concerning Christ and his church*, (Ephes. v. 32.) For the marriage of *Tipheret* and *Malcuth* (or *Cheneseth Israel)* is the marriage of Christ, the Lord from heaven, with his spouse the church, which is the whole congregation of Christian people. Which was represented in the conjunction of Adam and Eve, and of all other men and women descended from them, when they are joined together in holy matrimony; insomuch, that those divines, called *cabalists*, have formed this maxim about this matter; that *wheresoever in the Holy Scripture we read the love of man and wife, there is mystically designed the conjunction of* Tipheret *and* Cheneseth Israel.

Now this notion (of which the learned Dr. Cudworth hath long ago wrote a peculiar discourse) was so ancient among those doctors, that they had it before the times of Christ; it gives the plainest account, why John the Baptist uses the word *Christ* and *bridegroom*, as if they were in a manner synonymous, and of the same import; (John iii. 28, 29.) and why Christ himself compares the whole business of his heavenly kingdom (called by the people in St. Mark xi. 10. *the kingdom of our father David)* to a *marriage*, or *marriage-feast*, which a king made for his son, (Matt. xxii. 2, &c.)

V. And this is one argument of its being a very ancient notion among them, that idolatry and false worship in the church is constantly expressed in the Scriptures under the name of spiritual *fornication*, and *going a whoring* from God: whom therefore the church was to look upon as her husband. And so he taught the children of Israel to do, by using this form of speech throughout the whole prophetical writings, (Isa. liv. 5. lxii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 4. 20. xxxi. 32. Hos. ii. 2. 7. and many other places.) Nay, the very words of the apostle to the Ephesians, seem to suppose some such mystical sense, which was current in that nation, of those words of Adam the first man, (Gen. ii. 23, 24.) "This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, &c. therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Which the apostle takes, as if they had been spoken of Christ, and his love to his church, as any one may see that will read Eph. v. 29—32. For these are not, in the account of the cabalists, two distinct senses: but one and the same sense, different only as the matter and the form of the same thing: which form, say they, lies latent under the matter, whereby we are led unto it, as the main thing comprehended in it.

Thus Archangelus Burgonovensis speaks, in his preface to the explication of some select aphorisms of those divines, *gathered by Mirandula*, who observes also (p. 91. of his book), that as immediately after the fabric of the world was reared, matrimony followed, as the emblem of God's great love to those that should believe on him; so this world shall end in the sacrament of marriage: St. John shutting up all the mysteries of the Holy Scripture in the Revelation, with these words, "Let us be glad and rejoice: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," (Rev. xix. 7.) Which if it be the voice of the heavenly host, agrees with what the Hebrew doctors say, (in Pirke Eliezer, cap. 12.) of the marriage of Adam and Eve: that the *angels rejoiced at it, and with music and dancing attended upon the wedding.*

VI. All which things put together shew how naturally the thoughts of David were led, at Solomon's marriage, to sing concerning Christ and his church: and the thoughts of Solomon afterward to sing more largely of the wonderful love of the same heavenly bridegroom, in this *Song of songs*; that is, most excellent song. For so it may be truly called, both in regard of its subject-matter, and in regard of the manner of its composure: this parabolical way of writing, by figures and similitudes, being in many regards (as the forenamed cabalistical doctors discourse) the best of all others. First, because it is taken from things sensible, by which both learned men and ignorant can be instructed. Secondly, because such narrations very easily imprint themselves on the mind: A parable (say they) being instead of an artificial memory. And, thirdly, because all our knowledge hath its rise from sense, and therefore symbolizes much with sensible parables. And, fourthly, it is very delightful to contemplate how the parable agrees with the spiritual things, which are thereby figured. Unto

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which (saith that Archangelus beforementioned) the doctrine of St. Paul is conformable, when he saith, *the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are seen by those that are made.* And, lastly, what is there more evident, than that all visible things declare God to be love? whose praise Solomon celebrates in this Song. For by love (as the same author discourses of Boetius and others) the heavens are joined together, and the elements agree in composition, animals cohabit, cities are preserved, and all kingdoms supported and replenished. Which made Pherecydes Syrus say, that God was transformed into love, before he made the world. And because God created all things in love, he also embraces all things with the same love; and would have us to love; which is the sum of all that he exacts of us: that, being knit together by mutual love, we may in conclusion be united with him in love; that so all things may be one, as they were in the beginning.

Of this love, Solomon, say they, treats throughout this whole Song; nay, it is the subject of all the book of God. According to that of David, (Psal. lxii. 11, 12.) *God hath spoken once, viz.* to the whole people of Israel, when he gave the law at Mount Sinai; yea, *twice have I heard this,* from the prophets, that is, who say the same with the law, *that power belongeth to God, also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.* Which they expound in this manner, Thou canst send good or evil influences upon us; by the union of *Tipheret* and *Malcuth,* a good influence; by their separation, a bad. For when Israel doth well, then it receives good influences from above; that is, from *Tipheret:* for *such is the order* (says one of their aphorisms) *which is constituted in the archetypal world, that all good influences proceed from Tipheret.* And then these two principles are animated, when we observe God's precepts; but when we transgress the law, the one is separated from the other; that is, *Tipheret* doth not send influences upon *Malcuth* for our good; but another principle interposes, and sends anxiety and trouble. Now love is the union of these two principles: the love of man and wife signifying in Scripture the union of Israel and *Tipheret:* which union Hosea speaks of, when he saith, (ii. 19, 20.) "I will betroth me unto thee for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord."

Thus that sort of divines discourse; very agreeable to the sense of this book. Which represents the heavenly bridegroom, appearing in the greatest beauty; and sometimes in most familiar communication with his spouse, the church; but at other times withdrawing his glorious presence, and absenting himself from her. Who is represented, therefore, after the same manner, like to the moon (unto which they compare *Malcuth);* sometimes full of his heavenly light, sometimes illuminated only in part, and sometimes obscure and dark. Which will appear more at large, in the explication of the several parts of this book.

VII. The time of whose writing cannot be certainly known; but it is very probable, that it was not long after Solomon was seated on his throne: and had both the prophecy of his father David fresh in his mind; and was also strongly affected with the wonderful love of God to himself. He being filled then, likewise, with incomparable wisdom from above: such wisdom, that it brought the queen of Sheba to discourse with him, having "heard the fame of Solomon, because of the name of the Lord;" (1 Kings x. 1.) that is, as some of the Hebrews expound it, because she understood that the wisdom which was in him, was not merely natural, like that of the philosophers and eastern sages, but Divine and heavenly, by a special inspiration from above; whereby he was enabled to answer the hardest questions.

At that time, when these celestial gifts were newly poured into him (which the cabalists call the *unction of the Holy Ghost;* or the *sacred name,* of which Solomon speaks, say they, when he says, in the beginning of this Song, *Thy name is as an ointment poured out),* we may well conceive his mind shined in its greatest purity and clearness: and enjoying the sweetest and most perfect peace and tranquillity, was the fitter for such Divine meditations as these, which are the subject of this holy book. The sense of which seems to be expressed in 2 Cor. xi. 2. Where St. Paul (who was not *rude in knowledge,* ver. 6. but mightily versed, as that word *knowledge* signifies, in the mysteries of the Old Testament) puts the church of Corinth in mind of his solicitous concern for them in these words, *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.* For of that *one husband* alone, and of that *pure virgin,* and no other: and of their *espousals, love,* and *union,* is this incomparable Song of Solomon's to be understood and expounded.

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

There are four principal parts of this chapter: first, the bride comes in expressing the desire of Israel, nay of all nations, to see the Messiah. Who, next of all, is brought in (ver. 8.) testifying his love to all those that seek after him. And then (all her attendants having, with one voice, made a noble resolution, not to be unworthy of such love, ver. 11.) she speaks again, and declares her marvellous satisfaction in the knowledge and love of him, (ver. 12.) Which is the third part. And, lastly, they both conclude with mutual gratulations and praises; (ver. 15, 16.) and, accompanied with the symphony of all their attendants, (ver. 17.) commend the excellency of their habitation.

Ver. 1. *THE Song of songs, which is Solomon's.*] The most excellent of all the songs that Solomon (or any other person) ever composed: representing the ardent desire which was in him, and which he endeavoured to excite in all the people, to enjoy that great blessing of the Messiah. See Annot. [*a*]

Spouse.

Ver. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*] With the thoughts of whom his mind being wholly possessed, he burst forth into this most passionate strain of affection to him, saying, in the name of them all, O that he would come and speak to us by himself, and not merely by his pro-

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phets; who have told us so much of him, that I cannot but wish to converse familiarly with him, and receive the words of his own mouth (those words of grace, Psal. xlv. 2. which will ravish all men's hearts), and all other expressions of his incomparable love: which is to be preferred infinitely before the most delicious pleasures, that this good land wherein we live affords: yea, before the very sacrifices, and the wine that is poured out upon the altar unto God. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.*] By whom thou art so highly exalted, far above all other kings and prophets; and the fame which is already spread of thee, (Psal. xlv. 8, 9.) and of the knowledge which thou shalt impart into the world, is so sweet, so grateful and delicious, that for this cause all truly pious and holy souls (Psal. xlv. 14.) are in love with thee, and long to see thee. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee. The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.*] Appear then in thy power, majesty, and glory, and by thy mighty grace and love attract me and all my people to thee: which will make the whole world most readily and cheerfully devote themselves unto thy service. And, methinks, I behold this king in his royal splendour, as if he were already come; nay, he hath made me understand the secret mysteries of his kingdom; which give me a taste of that great joy, wherewith we have been told (Psal. xlv. 15.) all mankind shall enter into thy society: and it is but reason that we should all resolve with the highest satisfaction of mind, to rejoice and triumph in thee, and never to think of thy love, and the blessings we expect from thence, but with a pleasure beyond all other: and the better judgment any men have, and the more upright-hearted they are, the more perfectly will they love thee and thy unspotted righteousness. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*] And do not take offence, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, at his kind reception of all nations into his kingdom; but hear this answer to you, when you upbraid them with idolatry, and all manner of impurity: which is the same with that of a lovely shepherdess, when tanned by lying much abroad in the fields. My complexion, indeed, is dark and swarthy; but my features and proportions are comely and beautiful: though I seem as rustic as the skins of the tents, wherein the wild Arabs dwell; yet I am as amiable as the fine linen, which makes the curtains of the apartment of king Solomon. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*] Do not despise me, therefore, by considering only my outward hue, though it be exceeding black; since it is not naturally so, but contracted by being exposed to the sun: for my brethren and sisters, who should have been more kind, did me the greatest injury, and made me a slave to the meanest employments, in which I could not preserve my beauty; because I was like one that being set to keep other men's vineyards, could not look after his own.

Which is a lively emblem of the gentiles, who are descended from the same parents with yourselves, and though by worshipping the sun, and by other idolatries, they are become odiously polluted; yet, shall be cleansed by becoming the subjects of Christ, who will pity them, as seduced by false teachers, and neglected by you; which made them embrace any religion rather than the true. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?*] But let us all join together, professing our most hearty affection to him, and beseech him with one voice, saying, O thou whom I love above all things, instruct me in thy heavenly doctrine, and make me to understand, not only where we may learn thy will, but also enjoy thy true religion in quiet peace: for we are weary of wandering uncertainly after those who pretend to thy Spirit, but mislead such as are guided by them. See Annot. [*g*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 8. *If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed the kids beside the shepherds' tents.*] Unto which his answer is, Thy desire of true knowledge hath already made thee most amiable in my eyes (Psal. xlv. 11.) and therefore what thou understandest not, I will teach thee. Forsake those vain religions, (ver. 10.) by which thou hast been deluded, and enter into the holy assemblies of those pious souls that worship me: and bring thy young converts, to be instructed by those pastors, whom I will authorize in my church. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.*] Where they shall grow in strength, and increase in number; and under the conduct of those great men, who shall guide and lead them, speedily subdue all mankind unto my obedience: (Psal. xlv. 4.) for I have likened thee, whom I love, to those victorious armies of a mighty king, which trample all opposition triumphantly under their feet. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.*] And then will the very outward face of the church look most beautiful, by those various orders of spiritual gifts, wherewith I will enrich her: which shall make her appear like a lovely bride, when she is decked with all her jewels and ornaments, that add lustre to her beauty. See Annot. [*k*]

Chorus of Virgins.

Ver. 11. *We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver.*] Unto which all her members shall contribute, by their unanimous resolution, to lead such a life as may adorn their religion; and make the church shine in such splendour and glory, that she shall not come short of royal majesty, (Psal. xlv. 13.) See Annot. [*l*]

Spouse.

Ver. 12. *While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*] Whereby she shall become fit for the affections of her great Lord, when he sits upon the throne of his glory; acknowledging his bounty in all the benefits and ornaments he hath bestowed upon her, (Philip. iv. 18.) and making manifest the sweet and fragrant odour of his knowledge in every place: (2 Cor. ii. 14. compared with Psal. xlv. 8.) See Annot. [*m*]

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Ver. 13. *A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.*] From which knowledge every pious soul shall derive the greatest refreshment, comfort, and strength: and therefore love him above all things, and resolve never to let him slip outof their minds: but to preserve the remembrance of him most carefully, night and day, in their very hearts; as the most precious cordial, in all conditions, unto their spirits. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 14. *My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.*] And, indeed, there is nothing of such price, nothing so delicious among us for our bodily pleasure, but ought to put us in mind how much more inestimable that knowledge is, which thou, O Lord, who deservest all our love, vouchsafest for the comfort and satisfaction of our souls. See Annot. [*o*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 15. *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.*] Such shall be the language of those who are acquainted with his worth, which shall increase their mutual affection unto each other; and move him to give his church more sensible testimonies of his love, and repeated assurances how amiable her purity and modesty, her innocence and simplicity, as well as her decent order and comely government, are in his sight. See Annot. [*p*]

Spouse.

Ver. 16. *Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.*] And what can this love of his produce, but new admiration in her, of him and of his love, bursting forth into such expressions as these; Yea, rather, thou art most amiable and lovely, (Psal. xlv. 2.) not I; whose beauty and goodness are but a weak reflection of thy incomparable perfections, which move thee to communicate thyself in the most delectable graces unto all those that love thee: who, making one body with thee, may say, We feast together most sumptuously, and are entertained every day with those delights, which grow there only, where thou vouchsafest thy gracious presence. See Annot. [*q*]

Ver. 17. *The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.*] Who hast promised to dwell with us, in the several churches of thy saints; which are so many living temples dedicated to thy service: and, being protected and defended by thee, shall remain so stable and firm, that they shall last for ever. See Annot. [*r*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. *Song of songs*] Every one knows is an Hebraism for the most *excellent song;* as *Holy of holies* is the *Most Holy;* and *King of kings* the *greatest King.* And though the most natural meaning seems to be, that this is the most excellent of all the songs that Solomon made, (which were very many, 1 Kings iv. 32.) both in its structure and composure, and in regard of the subject whereof it treats: yet, since the Chaldee paraphrase, and abundance of Christian writers, think it called the most excellent song, with respect likewise to all the songs that had been formerly made by any prophetical person, as those, Exod. xv. Judg. v. 1 Sam. ii. &c. (because *they* celebrated only some particular benefits, *this* the immense love of God, not only towards that nation, but towards all mankind), I have not neglected that in my Paraphrase.

Which is Solomon's.] The Hebrew words are so contrived, that they may either signify *concerning Solomon (i. e.* Christ), or of which *Solomon was the author.* Which, I doubt not, is the first and literal meaning; because so the LXX. expound it; and so the same phrase is understood by all, in the titles of those Psalms, which are called *Psalms of David.* But it may be observed farther, that here are none of his usual titles added, as there are in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; where he is called *son of David, king of Israel,* and *king in Jerusalem.* Of which, if any reason is to be assigned, this seems the most probable, that those titles, which have respect only to his temporal estate, greatness, and dignity, he wholly forgot, when he was wrapped in contemplation of that celestial Prince, the Prince of Peace; in comparison with whom all others are not worth the naming; and whose character was best expressed by the name of Solomon alone: he being the great *Peace-maker* and reconciler of God and man.

[*b*] Ver. 2. *Let him kiss me.*] Solomon speaks this in the person of the *virgin daughter of Zion;* that is, the church. Whom he here introduces in the most passionate strain, wishing for some token of love, which is expressed under the metaphor of a *kiss.* But there is no mention at all made of the name, condition, or beauty of the person whose love is desired; nor any account given of the beginning or progress of this desire: but he makes her burst out on a sudden, and abruptly into these words, *Let him kiss me,* &c. that he might the more artificially describe the nature and force of Divine love: which, when it possesses the mind, snatches it so from itself, that it is wholly in him that it loves. It thinks of nothing else, seeks nothing, wishes nothing, speaks of nothing, but this alone: and imagines that every body else thinks of the same, and knows of whom it speaks.

It is just such a beginning as that of the eighty-seventh Psalm: where the Psalmist enters upon the description of the loveliness of Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, in this manner, *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*

Kisses of his mouth.] As a kiss given to another, was a token of love and kindness, friendship and familiarity, in those countries, (it being their manner to salute their guests whom they invited to their house, Luke vii. 45.) so many *kisses* were a token of abundant love, and excessive affection; as appears from what is there said by our Saviour of the woman, who had *not ceased to kiss his very feet.* And therefore, the beginning of this verse may be thus paraphrased, *Let him declare his love unto me, in the most familiar and most ample manner.*

Of which matter I have noted something elsewhere (Mensa Mystica); and therefore shall only add here, that, in the mystical divinity of the cabalists, these are the words of Malcuth the spouse, speaking to her Tipheret, the bridegroom: beseeching him to influence her with the gift of the Holy Ghost, or with *binah,* as they speak; that is, *understanding,* and *intelligence,* which is called by them the *mouth* of the *sephirot,* or emanations of light.

Better than wine.] *Wine* was the highest entertainment for those guests beforementioned; and therefore used by the Hebrews to express the greatest pleasure. There was a portion of it also to be poured out on the altar, in their offerings to God: and so may comprehend their sacrifices, which were the principal part of their religion. Unto both which I have had respect in the Paraphrase.

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[c] Ver. 3. *Savour of thy good ointments.*] *Ointments* also were not wanting at all their entertainments: with which some were wont to anoint their whole heads; or at least their nostrils: which they looked upon as conducing much to health, as well as pleasure. According to those famous words of Alexis the poet, in Athenæus's Deipnosophists, (lib. ii. cap. 7.)

Ἐναλείφεται τὰς ῥῖνας, ὑγιείας μέρος
Μέγιστον ὀσμὰς ἐγκεφάλῳ χρηστὰς ποιῶν.

Of which ointments there were exceeding great variety: four he mentions in that place, which were in common use; but a vast number more in his fifteenth book, chap. 11. out of Apollonius Hierophilus. Who shews, in a book on purpose about it, that several countries afforded unguents, that were most excellent in their kind. As the best of *roses* were made at Phaselis, and some other places; the best of *crocus* came from Soli, in Cilicia; that of *spikenard* from Tarsus, &c. ἡ δὲ Συρία τὸ παλλαιὸν χρηστὰ πάντα παρείχετο, &c. *Syria anciently* (though not in his time) *afforded excellent of all sorts, especially of one,* which he there names.

Now to this use of ointments some think Solomon here alludes; but I rather think he hath respect to his father's words, (Psal. xlv. 8.) and intended hereby to signify the glorious offices of the Messiah, whose very name (signifying *anointed*) carried in it all that could be desired: he being anointed by God to be the great deliverer and Saviour of his people. And these first words of the verse, the LXX. seem to me to have most rightly understood (whom I have therefore followed), who translate them thus; *The smell of thy ointments is above all spices:* taking *tovim,* which we translate *good,* for the *best* of ointments.

Therefore do the virgins love thee.] The attractive power of sweet ointments (to which Solomon here alludes) is notably declared in that which Basil (Epist. ad Julittam) relates of the manner of catching doves. Which was by breeding up one tame, and then, μύρῳ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτῆς χρίσαντες, *anointing her wings with ointment,* they let her fly away, καὶ ἡ τοῦ μύρου εὐωδία, &c. *and the sweet odour of the ointment drew abundance of pigeons after her;* which she brought to the cot of her owner. See this farther explained in the next note. [d]

[d] Ver. 4. *Draw me.*] In the beginning of this verse I suppose he comprehends all the nation of the Jews, as persons conjunct with him, in these words, *draw me.* And then speaks in the name of all other people, *we will run after thee.* For so the Hebrew writers themselves by *virgins* (in the foregoing verse) understand those, who, out of paganism, came into the church, and embraced the true religion: such as Jethro and Rahab; who, having heard of the miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness, joined themselves to the people of God. And, indeed, wonderful ardent was the love of those, who came from gentilism unto Christ: such as the woman of Samaria; (John iv.) the centurion; (Matt. viii.) the Canaanitish woman, (Matt. xv.) who had such faith as was not found in Israel.

The king hath brought me, &c.] Here now he seems on a sudden to have had a glance of the Messiah, the great king of Israel: and in the spirit of prophecy to have beheld a glimpse of those things, *which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither did they enter into the heart of man.* Which I understand here by the word *chadarau,* which we translate *chambers:* wherein he alludes to the chambers of the temple, (1 Chron. xxviii. 11.) but especially to the most secret place of it; into which no man might enter, but the high-priest alone: till Christ came and made way for us into the holiest of all, which was typified by it.

The upright love thee.] The two last words of this verse being capable of various translations, I have expressed the sense so largely as to comprehend them all in my Paraphrase. And shall only add, that the whole verse may be understood after this manner, that the first words, *draw me,* are the voice of the spouse; the next, *we will run after thee,* the words of the chorus of virgins. And then she speaks again, *the King hath brought me into his chambers;* and then they again express their joy at it in the following words, *we will be glad and rejoice,* &c. This came into my mind since I wrote the Paraphrase, and seems to be the plainest account of this verse.

[e] Ver. 5. *I am black,* &c.] The principal mystery of the kingdom of Christ, being the calling of the gentiles into fellowship with him (which is oftener called a *mystery* in the New Testament than any one thing whatsoever), Solomon seems to speak of that in this verse: having beheld, in the rapture wherein he was, the gentiles flocking to him, not without the great displeasure of the Jews, who contemned, and would have excluded them, as people incapable of his love: unto which the gentiles are here introduced, making their answer to the exceptions of the Jews, in these words: *I am black, but comely,* &c. The literal sense of which, and of the next verse, I have expressed so fully in the Paraphrase, annexing the spiritual sense at the end, that I do not think fit to enlarge upon it here. But desire the reader to take notice that the word *sechora,* which we translate *black,* denotes such a duskishness as is in the *morning* (called *sechar* in the Hebrew), when some little light begins to appear, and the darkness to fly away. Which aptly represents the condition of the gentile world, when they were upon the point of receiving the knowledge of Christ. Which this wise king Solomon might well foresee would be imparted to them; by observing a type of it in his own marriage, as well as in the marriages of other great men in former times. Which plainly shewed the Jews, if they would have learnt it, that there was no reason they should except against the conjunction of the gentiles with themselves; in the spiritual marriage of both, in one body, unto Christ. For Isaac married Rebecca, a gentile, and the daughter of an idolater, as appears from her brother Laban, who was no better, (Gen. xxxi. 19. 30. &c.) And this man's daughters Jacob married: whose son Judah, the prince of their tribes, took to wife a Canaanite, (Gen. xxxviii. 2.) as Joseph did an Egyptian; (Gen. xli. 45.) nay, Moses himself, that great deliverer and lawgiver, married an Ethiopian (or Arabian) woman; (Numb. xii. 1.) and, notwithstanding the anger of his brother and sister at this marriage, would not be divorced from her. Nahshon, also, a great man of the house of Judah, married Rahab of Jericho, and had by her Boaz, who took Ruth the Moabitess to wife, by whom he had Obed the grandfather of David. And, indeed, the very first institution of marriage having (as I have proved in the Preface) a mystical intention in it, which St. Paul unfolds in Ephes. v. these marriages may well be looked upon as emblems of the uniting all sorts of people with Christ, in one body of the church.

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[*f*] Ver. 6. Here they seem to give an account how they came to degenerate, and lose their original beauty; by false prophets and prophetesses, in the gentile world, who led them to idolatry: particularly to the worship of the sun, which was the most ancient of all other, (Deut. vi. 19. Job xxxi. 26.) and spread itself as far as the sun shineth. For it was the sun whom one country worshipped under the name of Baal; another under the name of Moloch; another of Chemosh; and others of Mithras and Osiris. Which last was the name given to it by the Egyptians; among whom the sun was worshipped in the famous city of Heliopolis (which took its name from thence), not far from the land of Rameses; where the children of Israel dwelt while they lived there, (Gen. xlvii. 11.) and so were more easily infected with that idolatry.

[*g*] Ver. 7. This verse I take to be the voice of the whole church, longing to be acquainted with his doctrine; which is compared to *food*, as his disciples are to *sheep:* whom shepherds were wont in those countries to lead into cool shades at noon, that they might not suffer by the heat. Unto which Solomon here alludes; representing all pious souls as afraid also of wandering from the true Shepherd, and falling like sheep that go astray, into the hands of strangers. All which metaphors are largely pursued by our blessed Saviour, in one of his parables, (John x.) as comparisons familiarly known to his disciples, who found them here first used in this holy book.

[*h*] Ver. 8. To the foregoing petition, he here returns this answer. Which needs no other explication than what I have given of it in the Paraphrase: unless we observe a difference between *flocks* and *kids*. The latter of which signifies the *goat's young ones;* and so may represent the new converts of the gentiles who formerly lay under an ill character, and did *male olere*, as they speak, smell rank of many foul superstitions. But I am not willing to meddle with such niceties.

[*i*] Ver. 9. *Company of horses*, &c.] This comparison may convince us, that Solomon doth not aim at any single person in this Song (either Pharaoh's daughter, or a beautiful Shunamite, or any other woman or virgin, who would very absurdly be compared to a *troop of horses*), but as a great many united in a body: *i. e.* the whole company of believers in the Messiah; who may very fitly be resembled to the *horses in the chariots of Pharaoh;* whose kingdom, in those days, abounded with the most excellent horses; which were famous for their strength, and fitness for service: as may be seen by the provision of them Solomon made for himself from thence, 1 Kings x. 28, 29.) and the great number which came from thence against Jerusalem, in his son's days, (2 Chron. xii. 3.) Long after which we read of their great force; (Isa. xxxi. 1. Jer. xlvi. 4. 9.) and consequently, the body of Christian people, that is, the church, being compared to a company of them, is set forth thereby as very powerful, and prevailing over all opposers.

[*k*] Ver. 10. The means of which is here represented to be by the power of the Spirit; wherewith Christ had endued his church. For the manner of bridegrooms being to present their future bride with jewels, or some other rich gifts (suitable to their quality and ability), Solomon alludes to them, as I take it, in this verse; and points at the gifts which his father foretold (Psal. lxviii. 18.) Christ would dispense, when he ascended up on high to his throne of glory: whereby several orders of admirable men were constituted in the church, (1 Cor. xii. 28, &c.)

[*l*] Ver. 11. And the design of all those gifts was to make men truly virtuous, which seems to be intended in this verse; (for love and good works are compared to *gold*, in the language of Christ himself, Rev. iii. 18.) which is the voice of all those that attended upon the bride.

[*m*] Ver. 12. That which makes the greatest difficulty in this book, is the frequent change of the persons that speak: and it is doubted here, whose language this is. I take it to be the bride herself, that here again gratefully acknowledges his benefits, and endeavours to make all the world sensible of them.

Sitteth at his table.] The King sitting at his table, signifying his rest and joy after all his labours; I have therefore expounded it of the throne of his glory; unto which our blessed Saviour being advanced, he received power to prefer others; whose honour and dignity are expressed by these two things, *eating at his table*, and *sitting by him upon thrones;* which were the same thing in our Saviour's own language, (Matt. xix. 28. compared with Luke xxii. 29, 30.)

Spikenard.] It is observed by Pliny that the most fragrant *nard* comes from the *spikes* of a very small contemptible shrub: which may well be looked upon as an emblem of the sweet odour of the gospel; wherewith such mean and despicable persons, as the apostles were of themselves, filled all the world by their preaching: together with the extraordinary holiness of their lives, which recommended their preaching very much to all observing men. So the cabalists expound this fragrancy, in the ancient book Zohar: where R. Judah saith, When good works are multiplied in the world, then the *cheneseth Israel* (i. e. the *congregation of Israel*, the same with *Malcuth*, in their language) exhales *rich in tovin, good odours*, i. e. most sweet and fragrant odours, being blessed by the holy King, &c. Which words the scholiast expounds thus, *she exhales sweet odours to her husband Tipheret*, and is most acceptable to him: the lower world (as his words are) being by this means married to the higher.

[*n*] Ver. 13. *A bundle of myrrh*, &c.] The church, deriving the greatest comfort and satisfaction, from his sitting on the throne of his glory, resolves here to keep him perpetually in mind, and in her most hearty affections: which is expressed by *myrrh* tied up in a little bag, and put into the bosom, as the manner was in those countries, to corroborate the heart, and exhilarate the spirits.

The bosom of all chaste women is inaccessible to any hand but that of their husband: and therefore here signifies the careful preservation of his memory, and of the doctrine he hath deposited in his church.

[*o*] Ver. 14. *Cluster of camphire.*] Nothing more puzzles interpreters than these words, which we translate *cluster of camphire*. For our *camphire* was unknown to the ancients, and doth not grow in clusters, but is the resinous substance of a tree in Borneo, and in China: and therefore is far better translated in the margin of our Bibles, *cypress*. But by *cypress* is not to be understood the tree which bears that name among us; but a far more aromatic plant in the east, which was a kind of *ligustrum* or *alcharma*, called by Pliny *cyperus*, and sometimes *cyprus:* which produced a most sweet bush of *flowers*, and also *berries*, not much different from the fragrancy of spikenard. Whence it is likely the

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famous island Cyprus took its name; because here (as at Ascalon in Judea, and on the banks of the Nile) the best, that is, the most odoriferous *cyprus* grows. Thus both Stephanus and Eustathius; The island Cyprus hath its name, ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ φυομένου ἄνθους Κύπρου, *from the flower of cyprus growing there:* as Bochart shews in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 3. Of which flowers, or of the seed, was made that ointment which Pliny calls the *unguent royal.*

But there is one that thinks these words may be translated, *precious cluster,* or *cluster of great value;* to be bought at any rate: because *copher* denotes the price of any thing that is purchased or redeemed. Such was the balsam that came from these shrubs; which grew at En-gedi (in the plains of Jericho), after the manner of vines; and therefore called, as Bochartus hath shewn, the *vineyards of En-gedi.* And thus the ancient Hebrew doctors, by dividing the first word אשכל have found out the mystery of the Messiah in these words. Which they understand, as if he had said, *My beloved is unto me* איש כל כופך *the man that propitiates all things.*

[*p*] Ver. 15. *Behold.*] This and the following verse, contain the mutual expressions of their love. First, of Christ to his church, in this verse: and that not only in regard of her inward purity, but of her external order; both which were remarkable: and therefore the word *behold* is repeated.

Doves' eyes.] The *eyes* shew more than any part else, the inward affections of the mind: and *doves' eyes* are the emblems of simplicity, candour, sincerity, and purity.

[*q*] Ver. 16. Here follows the expression of the church's love to Christ: whom she acknowledgeth to be the fountain of all that is in her.

Our bed is green.] By *bed* I understand their *table;* about which they sat on beds strewed with flowers, or such fragrant greens as were in season.

[*r*] Ver. 17. *Our house,* &c.] This last verse I take for a description of particular churches: by the *roof* or *covering* of which I understand their protection. And it being made of *cedar* and *fir,* there seems to be an allusion to the temple; in the fabric of which these were employed, as most durable and incorruptible. Others take that word we translate *fir* to signify *cypress:* which is still nearer to the sense I have given of this verse. Which sense will not seem at all forced unto those who consider, that not only the whole body of the faithful, which is the church universal, but the parts of it, or single churches, such as that at Ephesus, are represented by the apostle, as *a holy temple,* a *habitation,* or *dwelling-place of God:* which is built upon Christ, and with him makes up one house of God, (Ephes. ii. 20—22.) Nay, every particular faithful person is not only a *living stone,* as St. Peter speaks, in that building, but is called also a *temple* of God; who dwells in holy minds by his Spirit, (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19.) So that the *bride* and the *chorus of virgins,* might well, both with respect to Christ and to one another, use the style of *our house,* in this description of his dwelling-place.

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins a new colloquy, which hath two principal parts.

In the first of which the *bridegroom* owns the praises to belong unto him, which had been bestowed upon him, in the conclusion on the foregoing chapter, (ver. 1, 2.) and the *bride* again declares her high admiration of him, and satisfaction in him and his love; as infinitely surpassing all other enjoyments, and deserving greater love to him, than could be expressed, (ver. 3, 4, &c.) With which ecstacy of love he declaring himself to be highly pleased, (ver. 7.) then follows the second part, wherein she sets forth the wonderful power of Divine love to enlighten their mind, and to obtain the favour of illuminations from above. For now she speaks (ver. 8, 9, &c.) as if she saw him, and heard his voice, inviting her to partake of the blessings, which his appearing brought to mankind. The secure possession of which she also hears him promising to her, (ver. 14, 15.) and thereupon promises him most faithful obedience, (ver. 16, 17.)

Bridegroom.

Ver. 1. *I AM the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*] I am, indeed, the fountain of all true delight and pleasure: the rose of Sharon being not more grateful to the smell, nor the lily of the valleys to the sight, than the knowledge of me is to the mind of those who are acquainted with me. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*] Whereby thou, my dearly beloved, art become not unlike to me; appearing in such lustre and beauty among the nations of the world, as the lily doth among the thorns that grow in desert places. See Annot. [*b*]

Spouse.

Ver. 3. *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*] And thou appearest far greater and more lovely in my eyes, than the greatest princes of this world; who are no more to be compared with thee, than the wild trees that bring forth nothing but leaves, or only harsh or insipid trash, with the goodly apple-tree, when it is laden with its beautiful and pleasant fruit. Who can express the satisfaction which his protection affords! Under which I have constantly enjoyed a sweet repose; pleasing myself in the delightful thoughts of the blessed fruits of his coming among us, and of what he hath purchased for us. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.*] Which administers the highest joys to those who taste of them; and hath entertained, or rather feasted me, with such delicious hopes, that I cannot but glory in this, that I am listed under his banner whose motto is love: whereby he hath overcome, shall I say, or overpowered my heart, to submit myself wholly unto his wonderful love. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.*] Under the weight of which, who can support himself, when it sensibly touches his heart? I faint, I languish, I die, when I am deeply affected with that love: which overwhelms my spirit; and makes me call for a greater power than my own to enable me to bear the thoughts of his mighty love. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *His left hand under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*] And whence should I have that power but from himself? who then communicates most of the grace of his Holy Spirit to us (which is the greatest token

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of his love), when he sees our hearts fullest of love to him. See Annot. [*f*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 7. *I charge ye, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.*] In which he would have us take an uninterrupted pleasure, saying, I beseech, I charge you (all you that are her companions), I conjure you by all that is dear to you, not to discompose, or give the least disturbance to that love; but let it enjoy its satisfaction to the height of its desires. See Annot. [*g*]

Spouse.

Ver. 8. *The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*] Which words of grace can come from none but him, who is worthy of all our love: whom, behold, I see, though he be afar off: I see with what delight he comes, surmounting all difficulties and discouragements, to do the will of God, (Psal. xl. 7. 18.) See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the lattice.*] The swift motion of the roes and wild goats is but a weak emblem of his readiness to come down to us. And, though he do not yet actually shew himself among us, I see notwithstanding something of him; and behold him approaching nearer and nearer to us: like one that, resolving to be our guest, doth not presently enter, but first stands behind the wall of our house, then looks in at the window, and through the lattices or grates, whereby he is still more fully discovered. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*] And I hear his voice (who is worthy of all our love) calling unto us to meet him with our most forward desires, saying, Awake thou, who art most dear unto me, thou who art most beautiful in my eyes; arise and stay no longer, but come away from these dark representations of me.

Ver. 11. *For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*] For now that dismal time is past, wherein ignorance, error, and wickedness, overflowed the world, as floods do the earth in the winter-season: those cloudy and uncomfortable days are over, wherein thou couldest see and enjoy but little of me. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 12. *The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*] All tokens of a new world appear, and invite thee to come and partake of those joys and pleasures which the nearer approaches of the Sun of righteousness produce: who makes all manner of blessings spring up in such abundance, that it causes the heavenly host to sing for joy; and therefore cannot but fill all mankind with joyful hymns unto him. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 13. *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*] And for this especially, that their dead hopes are revived, and they receive the earnest and beginnings of that future bliss; the expectation of which is our greatest comfort in this life, and the consummation of it our highest happiness in the next: and therefore I say again, Awake, and stir up thy desires, thou who art most dear unto me, thou who art most lovely in my eyes; arise, and go, and take possession of those inestimable benefits. See Annot. [*m*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 14. *O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*] And be not afraid of those, who, seeking to destroy thee, force thee to flee, like an innocent dove, to hide thyself, and seek for safety in holes of the earth, in caves, and dens, and secret places; but from hence look up unto me, and call upon me, with praises and thanksgivings, and I will save and deliver thee: for I love thee inseparably, who art most amiable in my eyes, whose prayers and praises I delight to hear, and to behold my own image that is formed in thee. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 15. *Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.*] And therefore I require all those that act by authority from me, and to whom I have committed the care of my church, to use their early diligence also to discover and confute the sophistry of deceivers, who craftily insinuate their false doctrines into weak and incautious souls; and thereby seduce those who are newly converted, or but infirm in the faith. See Annot. [*o*]

Spouse.

Ver. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies.*] Unto which I hear the church reply, I will preserve my fidelity to him, who is my only beloved, as I am his; I will have nothing to do with those seducing spirits, but adhere to him alone: whose dwelling is not among subtle and crafty, but with simple and candid souls. See Annot. [*p*]

Ver. 17. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved; and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether.*] Only let him be pleased to vouchsafe his gracious presence with me, and to enlighten me more and more, till we have a full knowledge of him and of his will, (Rom. xiii. 11, 12.) and the light of it scatter all the shadows of the law: let my beloved also make haste to succour and relieve me in all difficulties and distresses; and shew the same readiness for my preservation that he did (ver. 9.) for my first salvation. See Annot. [*q*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. There is so little ground to apply the several parts of this Song to the several ages of the church, till the end of all things, that I cannot think fit to follow such interpretations. But shall pursue the method I have begun, and observe, that the Messiah is here introduced, as owning the praises which the church had bestowed upon him in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter. And that in such phrases as are becoming a pastoral, borrowed from flowers and trees (under which shepherds delight to sit and eat the fruit), and from such creatures as frequent the fields and woods, &c.

I am the rose.] And in this verse he first compares himself to a rose: which is still one of the goodliest things to which a great prince can be likened in those eastern countries. As appears from a letter, written by the Great Mogul in the Persian tongue, to king James, sent by Sir Tho. Roe: wherein he thus compliments his majesty of Great

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Britain: *As upon a rose in a garden, so are my eyes fixed upon you: God maintain your estate, that your monarchy may prosper,* &c. But it was chiefly prized by shepherds and shepherdesses; and accounted by them ἔρωτος φυτὸν, as Philostratus speaks, *the plant of love.* Insomuch, saith he, that if the great king have the diadem on his head, the soldier his helmet, as the greatest ornament; beautiful youths should have chaplets of roses, καὶ διὰ συγγένειαν τῆς ἐνωδίας, καὶ διὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον τῆς χροίας, *as near of kin to them both in sweetness and in ruddiness.* And Achilles Tatius (lib. i. Ἐρωτ. &c.) thus commends this lovely flower: If Jupiter would set a king over the flowers, it would be the *rose* that should reign over them: *Being the ornament of the earth, the splendour of plants, the eye of flowers, the blushing beauty of the field, or refulgent brightness,* &c.

Of Sharon.] *i. e.* The most excellent rose: for such were the roses of Sharon; as may be gathered from hence: that the rose, according to Pliny's observation, delights in dry places; and will not thrive in fat and unctuous soils, in rich clays, or grounds well watered, but in those that are lean, full of rubbish, &c. Now such was the soil about Sharon, as we learn from the Mischna, in the title Sota, chap. 8. where they that *built a brick house in Sharon* are said to have been deprived of the benefit of the law.

Deut. xx. 5. Upon which passage R. Solomon glosses, that the earth thereabout was unfit for making bricks; being so dry and crumbling, that the houses that were built of them had need to be repaired twice in seven years. Insomuch, that the Jerusalem Talmud saith, *This high-priest prayed by name for the Sharonites, upon the day of expiation, that their houses might not be converted into their graves.*

Lily of the valleys.] By the *lily* we are not to understand such as we call *lilium convallium,* or *May-lily;* but some more noble and fragrant flower; being joined here with roses: as it is in several poetical fragments (quoted by Athenæus, lib. xv. cap. 8, 9.) with violets, marjoram, and divers other sweet flowers. Insomuch, that he saith the Corinthians called the *lily* by the name of *ambrosia:* and he tells us out of Nicander, that it was esteemed χάρμ' Ἀφροδίτης, *the joy and delight of Venus,* because of its beautiful colour; and smell, also, I suppose: for in the twelfth chapter of the same book, he quotes a passage out of Theophrastus, who, treating of sweet ointments made of flowers, mentions τὸ ἐκ τῶν κρίνων, *that of lilies,* as well as that of roses.

But notwithstanding all this, the lily being vulgarly celebrated only for its beautiful colour, I have taken notice of that alone in the Paraphrase.

[*b*] Ver. 2. *As the lily,* &c.] They that believe in Christ partaking of his excellences, he here compares the church to a *lily* (*i. e.* to himself), as much excelling all other people who were not believers (for *daughters* signify *people* in the Hebrew language), as the *lilies* do *thorns,* which grow in desolate places. For the word we translate *thorns,* is wont to be joined together with those which signify *nettles and brambles,* (Isa. xxxiv. 13. Hosea ix. 6.)

[*c*] Ver. 3. *As the apple-tree,* &c.] To this the church here replies; and expresses her reciprocal affection, in such words as may be applied to signify his pre-eminence over all other gods; whom they were wont to worship under trees, as we read in Deut. xii. 2. 1 Kings xiv. 23. Isa. lvii. 5. and many other places.

I sat down under, &c.] In the latter part of this verse, and in those that follow, she turns her speech to her companions and attendants; relating the satisfaction and joy she took in his love.

[*d*] Ver. 4. *He brought me,* &c.] Which is set forth by a banquet, whereby (it is well known) the Hebrews were wont to represent the joys, even of the other world. And what greater joy have we here than to think of the stupendous love of God our Saviour towards us? which cannot but subdue our hearts to love him entirely. So I have paraphrased the latter part of the verse *(his banner over me was love),* taking in two senses of which the words are capable. The most obvious is, that *love was the inscription in his banner:* the other that *he conquers only by love;* a banner displayed supposing an armed force marching under it. Delherrus, in his Electa, lib. iii. cap. 9. hath not unfitly glossed upon the words, thus: "The banner of our Lord is his love, which he hath publicly declared to us, that he might draw us to himself: by which, also, when we are come to him, he retains us with him; and strengthens us by the same when we fight with our spiritual enemies. And that we may always look upon it and never quail, he carries it over us; that is, renders his love most familiar to us. He that knows not this banner, can be none of his soldiers; and he that deserts it is undone, unless he presently return to it. So that as the Roman legions had their several names, (one of which was called the *pious,* another the *faithful,* another the *thundering,* another the *victorious,* &c.) in like manner the Christian band may be called *amoris legio,* the *legion of love.*"

[*e*] Ver. 5. *Stay me with flagons,* &c.] This verse is a description of one falling into a swoon, by the abundance of her love: in which case cordial spirits are wont to be called for, to revive such persons, and keep them from fainting quite away. Comfortable smells, also, are wont to be administered to the nose; which is the meaning of calling here for fragrant *apples, oranges, citrons,* &c. (as well as wine) which are all comprehended under the name of *tappuach* in the Hebrew: which is a word that in its very original imports an *exhalation,* or *odour-breathing,* from that which is so called. By which the church is represented to be so marvellously affected with the love of Christ, as to be even oppressed under the weight of Divine benefits: and at a perfect loss what to think of them; having little or nothing to return for such infinite obligations.

[*f*] Ver. 6. *His left hand,* &c.] This is a representation of the tenderest affection of a husband to his wife, when he sees her in danger to faint: and being applied to Christ and his church, sets forth his readiness to succour us, in all our needs, by the power of his Spirit. I go not about to divine what is distinctly meant by the *left hand,* and what by the *right* (which I look upon as too great a curiosity in interpreters), but take them both to express one and the same thing. And the *hand of the Lord,* signifying, oftimes in Scripture, the power of the Spirit, I have applied them to that.

[*g*] Ver. 7. *I charge you,* &c.] It is dubious whether this verse be the voice of Christ or of the church. I take it to be his; who is the good Shepherd, represented in this pastoral Song. Which, suitable to its nature, is still full of rural similitudes, taken from the *roes* and *hinds:* which are

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most amiable creatures, (as hath been observed upon Prov. vi.) with which not only shepherds, but the greatest persons in the world, have delighted themselves. And that word which we well translate *I charge you*, I take to be only a solemn form of earnest beseeching and entreaty (which all persons are wont to make by those things that are dearest to them), not an adjuration, which is not lawful for any to make, but only by God. I have contented myself therefore with this simple paraphrase of that passage; and sought for no mystical interpretation, as the matter is, which may be found in most interpreters; who, among other things, by *roes* and *hinds* understand the *angelical powers:* to which the cabalists apply these words, and would have them to signify as much as, *I adjure you by the tribunal of justice, whence the wicked are punished.*

[*h*] Ver. 8. *He cometh leaping*, &c.] To the same sort of creatures, and to young wild kids, he alludes in this verse. For they are numbered among those creatures which are most nimble in running, jumping, and leaping, even to the tops of mountains, as Bochartus hath largely shewn: demonstrating that what we translate *young hart*, (ver. 9.) is the *young wild goat*. I seek, therefore, for no mystery here neither; but take the words to be a description only of the Lord's alacrity and cheerfulness, to come down from the heavens (which may be meant by *mountains*), to dwell among us, who dwell here below upon the earth. Yet I shall note, that they seem to be most ingenious, who hereby understand his passing by angels (for so some translate the words, *skipping over the mountains*), and leaping, as it were, over their heads, to take upon him the nature of man.

[*i*] Ver. 9. In like manner, it is a very ingenious conjecture, that his *standing behind the wall*, in this verse, may be applied to his shewing himself in those days only in the law of Moses (which was the wall of partition between the Jews and us), and his *looking through the window*, or *in at the window*, &c. to his shewing himself then in figures and prophecies, which they had of him; by which he was known but obscurely to them. But I have not meddled with this in the Paraphrase.

[*k*] Ver. 10, 11. *Lo the winter is past*, &c.] In these verses Solomon represents his voice speaking to them by the prophets (though he himself was not come), and calling them to him, as if he was just appearing. For by the *winter* and the *rain*, I understand with Theodoret, *τὸν πρὸ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ χρόνον, the time before his coming:* when the gentile world was buried in dismal darkness; and the Jews themselves saw things only through clouds: and neither of them had much of the warmth of the Divine law.

[*l*] Ver. 12. *The flowers appear*, &c.] And then here follows a description of the spring: which is set forth by three things; the *appearing of the flowers*, which had lain as if they had been dead; the *singing of birds;* and the *voice of the turtle*. Which, as Aristotle observes, (Histor. Nat. lib. viii. cap. 3.) disappears in winter, and comes forth again when the spring is a little advanced: and therefore is here very properly mentioned in the last place, among the notes of the spring. Which being the time of all others most welcome to shepherds, for the feeding of their flocks, and for all manner of pleasures, represents, as the same Theodoret conceives, *τὸν μετὰ τὴν παρουσίαν, the joyful time after our Saviour's coming*. When a new world appeared, and there was a greater abundance of Divine blessings, especially of the Spirit, poured forth: which the Chaldee paraphrast takes to be meant by the *voice of a turtle*. Which is a kind of dove; in the form of which the Holy Ghost descended at our Saviour's baptism. And then the *singing of birds* may be applied to the songs of the heavenly host, at his birth. Others will have this *turtle* to have been the figure of John the Baptist: which is also pat enough: but I have only touched upon such things, and do not think fit here to enlarge upon them. But conclude this note with this observation, that Benjamin Tudelensis, in the conclusion of his Itinerarium, expressly applies these words to the coming of the Messiah: saying, that *they cannot be gathered to their own land, till that time of the singing of birds come, and the voice of the turtle; and till they come who preach glad tidings, saying always, The Lord be praised.* R. Alschech also applies the voice of the turtle to Elias, glossing thus, *The voice of the turtle also, hath it not been heard in our land, by the means of the prophet? according to that which is said, Behold, I will send to you Elias the prophet*, (Mal. iv. 5.)

[*m*] Ver. 13. *The fig-tree putteth forth*, &c.] After the spring-time, here follows a description of the entrance of summer: of which the putting forth green figs, and the blowing of the vines, nay, the knotting of the grapes, were a sign. In the end of which the *harvest* coming, hereby is denoted, saith the same father (Theodoret), *τὸν προσδοκώμενον αἰῶνα, the world which we expect hereafter:* unto which I have applied this verse. Where it may be observed, that *fig-tree* and *vines* are fitly joined, for they were wont to be planted together, (Luke xiii. 6, 7.)

[*n*] Ver. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clefts*, &c.] Some of the Hebrew writers, whose sense the Chaldee paraphrast expresses, refers this to the people of Israel flying from Pharaoh, like a dove before the hawk that is ready to seize her: but may be better referred to the church of Christ, in danger to be torn in pieces by her pagan persecutors, and by the Jews themselves; as it was in the beginning of our religion. Which forced Christians to hold their assemblies under ground, in obscure places (where they sung hymns to our blessed Lord before the break of day), and made the church perfectly like a dove, who, being in fear of ravenous birds, flies into clefts of rocks, and to secret holes in steep places, to preserve herself.

The church is so often compared by Christ to a *dove* in this book, that it is fit to give some account of it. And Bochartus (de Sacr. Animal. lib. i. cap. 4. p. 11.) takes this to be the principal, if not the only, reason of it; to signify her to be his only beloved: and that he alone also is most dear to her. For in *doves* there is a wonderful love (observed by many authors) between those that are once paired: who never part, but keep faithful the one to the other. And so are a fit emblem of the church, whom the apostle saith he had espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, (2 Cor. xi. 2.)

Let me see thy countenance.] That word which we translate *countenance* or *aspect*, may be rendered *shape* or *fashion;* denoting all the comely proportions of the church, by her likeness to her Lord Christ.

[*o*] Ver. 15. *Take us the foxes.*] *Foxes* abound in Judea, and are observed, by abundance of authors, to love grapes, and to make great devastations in vineyards. Insomuch,

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that Aristophanes, in his Equites, compares soldiers to foxes; spoiling whole countries, as they do vineyards. Now the prophet Ezekiel, comparing false prophets to foxes, (xiii. 4.) it hath led all interpreters (in a manner) to understand by foxes in this place, *heretics:* who appeared very early in the church, and therefore are compared to *young foxes;* in regard of their known craft and subtilty, windings and turnings, shifts and evasions; whereby the more simple sort especially, and such as were newly converted (compared here to *tender grapes,* as the church itself is to a *vine),* were in danger to be undone, unless a timely care was taken to prevent it. And therefore this verse seems to be an answer to the church's prayers, flying to her Lord for refuge. Who seeing her danger not to be greater from tyranny than from false teachers, calls upon his companions; that is, the apostles, bishops, and pastors of the church, to look after them, and to take them in their craftiness. And that whilst they were *young;* in the beginning, that is, their appearance in the world: because their "vain babblings were apt to increase to more ungodliness, and their words did eat as a gangrene," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 16, 17.) Especially when the church was but newly planted, and those seducers applied themselves chiefly to such as had but newly received the faith, or to weak and unsettled people, who were easily caught by them, unless great care were taken to discover their frauds, and to confute their sophistry.

Which was the taking of these *foxes,* as Theodoret expounds it: and St. Bernard also; who observes that he saith, *take to us* the foxes: that is, *Sibi et sponsæ, to himself, and to his spouse.* As much as to say, If it be possible, let them be reconciled to the Catholic church, and brought back to the true faith. If that could not be, then other methods succeeded; and the apostles *delivered up* such dangerous deceivers *unto Satan:* which was a punishment that included in it bodily affliction, that they might learn not to blaspheme, (1 Tim. i. *ult.*)

[*p*] Ver. 16. *My beloved is mine,* &c.] As the former verse was his answer to the church's prayers; so this is the church's acknowledgment to him for his care: together with a profession of such firm adherence to him, as suits with the name of a *dove,* which he had bestowed on her, (ver. 14.)

He feedeth.] To *feed, viz.* his flock, is to have his abode among them. (See vi. 2.)

[*q*] Ver. 17. *Until the day break,* &c.] All that she desires farther is only his gracious presence with her; which she begs in this verse he would vouchsafe her *upon the mountains;* that is, those steep places mentioned before, ver. 14. (where the church was fain to worship him in great secret, because of the present danger) especially while any disputes and controversies remained about the Jewish ceremonies, which were a great disturbance to the church, as well as the afflictions and persecutions she endured; which are compared to the *night* and *darkness,* as the other to *shadows.*

Turn my beloved.] The word *turn* doth not suppose him absent: but only that he did not immediately attend, or shew the regard he had to her prayers in distresses.

Like a roe.] See chap. viii. 14.

Mountains of Bether.] *Bether* is the same with *Bethel,* these two letters, *r* and *l,* being easily and often changed, as Bochartus hath observed, (in his Geograph. Sacra, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 33.) in many instances. As, for example, an island in the Persian Gulf is indifferently called *Tyrus* and *Tylus:* and *Tavila* in Spain is the same with *Tabira:* and *Caralis* in Sardinia the same with *Calaris,* &c. In another work, indeed, of his (De Sacris Animal.) he takes *mountains of Bether* for *mountains full of clefts.* Which would agree well with what went before, (ver. 14.) and might be handsomely applied to the state of the church, when there were many breaches and rents in it: but the other is plainer and more literal.

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins the third of those interlocutory discourses, which compose this famous Song: part of which only is contained in this chapter. In which the *bride* and her companions speak all but one verse, which seems to be spoken by the *bridegroom.* For whose coming she still longs; and is introduced full of solicitude about it. Which proved not in vain, but was gratified with so much satisfaction in the hope of it, that, as he takes care it should not be disturbed, so all her companions rejoice exceedingly in it. For those are the two parts also of this chapter. In the first of which he testifies her earnest desire to find him; who filled her with joy, when she had got a sight of him (in the four first verses): in the second, they that attended on her after he had renewed his former charge, (ver. 5.) are transported with joy, to behold the multitude of his followers, and the greatness of his royal glory. Which is the sense of the rest of the chapter.

Spouse.

Ver. 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*] Many have been my thoughts about him, who (by what the prophets have foretold of him) is become the beloved of my soul. But, though I have sought him in the greatest retirements, and when my mind was most composed, and that one night after another; though with a diligent search, I have sought him in all the holy books; yet I can find no more than predictions and shadows of him, which assure me he will come, but cannot bring me to the sight and clear knowledge of him. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *I will rise now, and go about the city; in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*] Whereupon I resolved to leave these private studies, and to go abroad and consult with others: and there is no place which I have not frequented, where I thought I might learn any thing of him. For I have fetched a compass round the whole city of Jerusalem (which is the holy city, the joy of the whole earth), and there is not one street, not any place of public resort, but I have gone into it, and inquired after him, both in the lesser and greater assemblies; I inquired of all the holy men I could meet withal; but could meet with no more tidings of him, whom my soul longs to see; because I love him above all things. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?*] But in

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the midst of these anxious thoughts there was some satisfaction presented to me, from some of those great ministers of God, who watch for the good of others; and employ themselves every where to direct his people: of whom I made the same inquiry, if they could tell me any thing of him, who had engaged my affections so much, that I could not often enough profess my love unto him. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*] For I received such illuminations from them, that I had not long left their company, before I saw this beloved of my soul, as if he had been actually present with me; which transported me with such joy, that I could not think of parting with such a sight, but took fast hold of him; to keep him with me, till I had shewn unto all that wait for him, what I had been so happy as to find myself. See Annot. [d]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 5. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love.*] And here again I heard him graciously renew the charge he had given before (ii. 7.) to all my companions, saying, I conjure you, by all that is dear to you, not to discompose, or give the least disturbance to this love; but let it enjoy its satisfaction, to the height of its desires. See Annot. [e]

Companions.

Ver. 6. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?*] And now, what is this that we see? who is this goodly person? or rather this crowd of people coming up out of desolate places in one body, to Mount Zion; and appearing like the pillars of smoke which arise from the altar of burnt-offering; and no less acceptable to God, than the sweet odours that ascend from the altar of incense, in the holy place? See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. *Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.*] Behold the love which the great King hath to her, having prepared all things for her reception into society with himself: of whose royal person and happiness Solomon himself, in all his glory, is but a figure. Who is magnificently attended, indeed, and strongly guarded in his palace, by a number of valiant persons that encompass him night and day, in his bed, and in his throne: but are not comparable to the power, and force, and multitude, of that heavenly host, which secure the church in her enjoyments, and take care of her continual safety. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. *They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.*] Who are all unanimously bent, and in a constant readiness (like that guard of valiant men about Solomon, with their swords drawn in their hands), being not less skilful than able to succour and defend his people, from all the assaults of their invisible enemies; who seek to destroy them, by raising terrible persecutions against them. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. *King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.*] But all in vain: for, as king Solomon hath caused a chariot of the choicest cedar to be made for him, and for his royal spouse, to appear in publicly, when he makes his progress through the kingdom; so doth this far greater King ride on prosperously, (Psal. xlv. 4.) by the means of such instruments as he himself hath formed, and enlarges the borders of his church, by the preaching of his everlasting gospel. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. *He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple; the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.*] Unto which the magnificence and riches of that chariot is not worthy to be compared; though the pillars of it being of silver, the back, the sides, and the seat being of cloth of gold, the curtains and covering of it being of the brightest purple, the carpet also under the feet being curiously wrought with the most lovely figures by the daughters of Jerusalem, they make it very inviting to all spectators: for what is this to the wonderful love of God, and to the riches of his grace, in his great and precious promises (far dearer to all good souls than thousands of gold and silver), which the gospel calls us not only to behold, but to enjoy? See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.*] Make this then a festival day, and let no domestic cares hinder you from bearing a part in the public joy: but as all the daughters of Jerusalem went out to behold the glory wherein king Solomon shone when he appeared in state with that royal crown which his mother put upon his head on his marriage day, that day which completed all his joys; (Psal. xlv. 15.) so let all the people of God every where admire and extol the surpassing glory of that great King, who shall appear to be crowned with glory, honour, and joy, by God himself; on that happy day when he shall publicly own his church, and give her the highest testimony of his endless love, (Rev. xix. 6, 7. 12.) See Annot. [l]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. The beginning of this chapter might be connected with the foregoing, and applied to the state of the church under affliction; if the following words would suit with that exposition, which they do not, in my opinion; for he had desired to *hear her voice*, ver. 14. of the second chapter, and now she cannot find him. Therefore I incline to think, that the very same thing is again represented in other words (after the manner of the prophets; particularly of Isaiah, who over and over again, in several schemes of speech, foretells their restoration from the captivity of Babylon, and, under that shadow, their greater salvation by Christ); *viz.* the earnest desire of the church for the coming of Christ: which Solomon expresses by the passionate longings he found in himself to see the blessed day.

By night.] And so *by night*, may be understood that dark time which was before his appearing; when good men sought for him, and had many dreams and visions about him; but could meet only with the shadows and images of him; which signified him to come, but did not exhibit his very presence to them. Of which neither the temple, nor

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the sacrifices, nor the sacred books, could discover any thing clearly: but was represented here to Solomon in a vision he had of him, and of the church which was espoused to him, after he had sought a long time, and groped every where after him, in that dark night wherein they lived. So, as I said, the *night* may be expounded: for such a dismal condition were they in just when he appeared, (Matt. iv. 16. Luke i. 79.)

On my bed.] This is expounded with strange variety by interpreters: some understanding hereby the *bed of affliction;* others, the *bed of ease and pleasure;* others, of *weakness and infirmity,* &c. But I have taken both *bed* and *night,* in the most simple sense, to signify the *time* and *place* for most composed thoughts: according to the meaning of Psal. iv. 4.

[*b*] Ver. 2. *I will rise now.*] To *rise up* signifies more active diligence than before had been used

Go about the city.] By the *city* may be understood Jerusalem; that is, the whole church of the Jews, whereof it was the head; and therefore the figure of the church of Christ in future times, (Isa. lxii. 5—7. Heb. xii. 22.)

In the streets, &c.] *Schevakim,* which we translate *streets,* are the lesser thoroughfares in the city, or the streets of lesser cities: as *rechoboth* are the greater, wider streets, or rather the *streets* of the royal, capital city: signifying here his search both in the lesser and the greater assemblies of God's people.

[*c*] Ver. 3. *The watchmen that go about,* &c.] By *watchmen* I understand the prophets, and such-like excellent persons who instructed the people, (Ezek. iii. 17. xxxiii. 6, 7.) of whom he asks, if they *saw* him whom he sought after. From which word I gather that he speaks of such as were anciently called *seers:* of whom he saith he was found; that is, they shewed him something of the Messiah.

[*d*] Ver. 4. For so it follows here in this verse, that not long after his discourse with them, he *found him whom his soul loved, i. e.* came to the knowledge, or had a sight and enjoyment of him. In which vision (looking upon him as actually come) he endeavours to retain him, and to bring him into the temple, there to shew him to all the pious worshippers of the Divine Majesty. For that is literally the *house of my mother:* as *cheder corathi (the chamber of her that conceived me)* I take to be the inward part of that house, or the *most holy place.*

[*e*] Ver. 5. And there he expresses his affection to him (that is, to the church, whose passionate desires Solomon here represents in the four foregoing verses), in the same words as he had done before in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 7.) where this verse is already explained.

[*f*] Ver. 6. *Who is this,* &c.] Here begins a new vision, which he had of multitudes of people gathering unto Christ like a cloud of smoke: which fills his *companions* with great admiration. For it is their voice which we read in this verse, where the word *zoth* may be translated either *what,* or *who:* and by the *wilderness,* may be understood the forlorn condition wherein men were before, not only in gentilism, but even in the Jewish estate. Which made it more wonderful that the church should come thus richly adorned (expressed here by the *perfumes* of her garments), to be brought in state and pomp to the king's palace; there to be espoused to him. But all that gave up themselves to him, becoming thereby a holy people, were highly esteemed by him: and therefore compared there to the *pillars of smoke* (as I take it) that went up every day from the altar of burnt-offering, at the temple, beforementioned; and ascended in a straight line, like a firm pillar, that was not in the least moved from its uprightness, though the wind blew never so boisterously. So the Jews report in Pirke Avoth, cap. 5. and in other books: where these are reckoned among the *ten miracles* which were seen in the temple: that *the greatest rain never put out the fire; and the most vehement winds never dispersed, or in the least bent, the smoke:* but it went steadfastly up to heaven. And how acceptable such persons were to Christ, is farther represented by the *sweet perfumes* which were burnt upon the altar of incense. For Solomon, I conceive, here alludes (in the last clause of this verse) to that composition which God ordered to be made of sweet spices for his own service at the tabernacle: which none might presume to imitate, or make use of in other places, (Exod. xxx. 34, 35, &c.)

[*g*] Ver. 7. *Behold his bed,* &c.] And here is farther represented in the same vision, the happy condition of the church (signified by the *bed of Solomon*) in society and fellowship with Christ: of whom Solomon was a type, both in his royal person, and state and marriage; (as appears from Psal. xlv.) whose *bed* or *throne* (for the *thrones* of the eastern kings were in the form of a *bed* or *couch,* wherein more persons than one might sit, Rev. iii. 21.) was secured by the most valiant men in the kingdom; who are said to be *threescore,* a determinate number being named (as the manner is) for an undeterminate. Though some conceive that Solomon doubled the number of that band of mighty men, which was in David's time, which consisted of *thirty,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. 23. In the end of which chapter, (ver. 39.) we read also of *thirty and seven* persons, who were of great note for their valour. To whom, if we add the *eleven* princes mentioned in 1 Kings iv. beginning; and the *twelve* great officers, which had the care of making provision for his household in the several provinces, (ver. 7.) they make just this number of *sixty.* And may be looked upon as a figure of that strong guard, which is about the prosperity and happiness of the church: which is defended by angels, who are mighty ones, indeed, and very numerous, (Psal. lxviii. 17.) and all ministering spirits for those that are heirs of salvation; (Heb. i. *ult.*) nay, the most mighty of the heavenly host, it may be easily proved (if this were a place proper for it), are the guardians and protectors of Christianity:

[*h*] Ver. 8. *Because of fear in the night.*] And do all of them unanimously oppose the *spiritual wickedness, i. e.* wicked spirits, *in high places;* who seek to destroy the church, (Ephes. vi. 12.) and may be meant by the *terror of the night,* as the Hebrews expounded Psal. xci. 5. and, being the rulers of the gentile world, stirred them up to persecute Christianity, as destructive to their kingdom of darkness.

[*i*] Ver. 9. *Made himself a chariot.*] But, in spite of all they could do, Christ is here represented under the type of Solomon, as carrying his church triumphantly through the world (for the word *appirjon,* which is never elsewhere used, seems to signify an *open chariot,* in which Solomon, and, perhaps, his queen, rode, to be exposed to the view of every one in the streets of Jerusalem); who beholding her, and the

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love of Christ to her, were thereby invited to become members of his church.

Most lexicographers derive this word *appirjon* from a root which signifies to fructify; and therefore will have it to signify a *bed*. But Avenarius, I think, more probably hath derived it from two words, which give it the signification of something carried on wheels: and therefore must denote, at least, a *chariot having a bed or cushion in it.*

The wood of Lebanon] Is cedar; denoting the perpetuity of the gospel; the preaching of which is the *chariot* here mentioned. So Theodoret, by the φορεῖον (as the Greek translates it) ἁγίους Ἀποστόλους νοήσωμεν, &c. *Let us understand* (saith he) *the holy apostles, who carried the name of the Lord before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel,* &c. These were literally *made* and formed by Christ *himself:* whereas the chariot wherein Solomon rode, he could only command or direct others to make.

[*k*] Ver. 10. The description of the richness of this chariot of Solomon's follows in this verse: in which we are not to seek, I think, for something in the gospel answering to every part of it, but only to look upon it as setting forth the great splendour of it, and the riches of that grace which God vouchsafed to men therein.

The particular parts of the chariot I have described as well as I could in our language; and inserted in my Paraphrase another translation of the last word *mibbenoth;* which signifies as well *from* or *by,* as *for, the daughters of Jerusalem.* The most ingenious of which it is likely were employed in working that *foot-cloth,* which lay at the bottom of the chariot, with elegant figures, of shepherds and shepherdesses, perhaps, and all their innocent courtships. So that phrase may be interpreted, *paved with love:* but I have contented myself in the Paraphrase to say only, with *lovely figures.*

Some think they find in this chariot an imitation of that seat whereon God himself sat between the cherubims; with which they have compared it: but I cannot be persuaded that Solomon would be so audacious.

[*l*] Ver. 11. Nor do I see any foundation for the fancy of the Hebrew in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 15. (which the Chaldee paraphrase touches upon) where they make the day of Solomon's espousals to be the next day after the feast which he held seven days, for the consecration of the temple, (1 Kings viii. 66.) Which was *the day of the gladness of his heart,* indeed; but cannot be called his *espousals.* Which was not the day of his coronation neither; for then he did not ride in a chariot, but upon his father's mule: and was not crowned by his mother, but anointed by Zadoc the priest and Nathan the prophet, (1 Kings i. 33, 34.)

The day of his espousals] Therefore was the day when he took Pharaoh's daughter to wife; at which time, it was the manner to crown married persons: and his father being dead, it was done by his mother. Of this custom mention is made by many authors; which the learned reader may find in Bochart's Geographia Sacra, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 25. where he applies that passage in Ezekiel unto this, (xvi. 8. 12.) *When I looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love (i. e.* thou wast fit for marriage), *I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine; and I put a jewel in thy forehead,* &c. *and a beautiful crown upon thy head.* For the Mischna informs us, that this nuptial crown was in use among the Jews, as well as other nations.

All which I do not see how it is any other way applicable unto Christ, than I have expressed in the Paraphrase. The church, indeed, herself may be said to be his *crown* and joy, in that sense wherein St. Paul saith the Thessalonians were his, (1 Thess. ii. 19.) But this is not to put a *crown* upon him; and the church can in no sense be called his *mother,* especially since she is his *bride.* And therefore herein interpreters strain too much; who ought, I think, to have ascribed that to God the Father in the mystical sense, which is ascribed unto Bath-sheba in the literal.

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

The first seven verses of this chapter I take to belong to the foregoing: and are the words of the *bridegroom,* who, praising the incomparable beauty of his *spouse,* and assuring her she should still appear more lovely and illustrious, concludes the third scene, as some call it, of this dramatic poem. And then begins a new representation at the eighth verse; which continues to the second verse of this the fifth chapter, and composes the fourth part of this Song. Wherein the *bridegroom* expresses his love to his *spouse,* his esteem of her, and joy in her, in words of greater dearness, and higher kindness, than have been hitherto used. Which she prays may be continued; and he graciously grants, inviting all to partake in their joys.

Bridegroom.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.*] Great is thy beauty, O my beloved, admirable is thy beauty, worthy of men's contemplation. Whom I can liken to nothing better than to a pure and chaste virgin, (2 Cor. xi. 2.) whose modest eyes, fixed only upon him to whom she is espoused, sparkle within her locks, when she is unveiled: and who appears to want none of those comely ornaments, which are wont to set off the natural beauty of the face. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.*] Part of whose grace lies in the sweetness of the mouth, full of white and even teeth; none of which stand out, or are longer than the rest, but all closely set both above and below in exact order and equality: being firm and sound also, without any breach, or want of so much as one of them. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.*] To which add fine and delicate lips, of a bright and lively crimson colour; with a sweet and charming voice; and cheeks that appear of as pure a white and red, when the veil is off, as the blossoms of pomegranates. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*] And all this upon a goodly body, of a proper and tall stature; whose round and well-formed neck resembles that lofty structure of the tower of David, which may be a pattern of other neat and elegant buildings; and is not more adorned with the shields and bucklers of

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his worthies, which hang there in great abundance, than it is with pendants, and a necklace of pearl, and other jewels, which have been the treasure of mighty princes. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.*] Below which the two breasts rise up, purely white, exactly round, of a just size and equal bigness: which put me in mind of two young kids, that being formed together, and brought forth at the same time, are so perfectly like, that none can know the one from the other; the tops of whose heads I have seen, at a distance, appear like the teats of these breasts, as they fed in the same field among the lilies. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.*] Such as this is the beauty of my church, as will be seen more fully, when the night of persecution is gone, which hides it from the eyes of worldly men: though, in the mean time, she is most lovely in mine; and no less precious than the mountain and the hill from whence are fetched the most excellent perfumes and the richest spices. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *Thou art fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.*] To say all in one word, thou, my love, art the perfection of beauty; there being a most admirable harmony between the several orders, estates, and degrees of men in the church; and not the least spot or blemish (Ephes. v. 27.) to be found in its constitution. See Annot. [*g*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 8. *Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*] And now that all the world may see I have espoused, nay married, thee unto myself, (Rev. xxi. 2.) come from those horrid mountains whither thou hast fled for safety, (ii. 14. 17.) where, though I was present with thee, yet thou wast not free from danger, but exposed to the rage and cruelty of furious and troublesome men: come, I say, and dwell there no longer; but look down from thence, and behold the goodly heritage, and the pleasant state, that I have prepared for thee. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.*] Thou hast strongly engaged my affection; thou hast endeared thyself unto me, my tenderly-beloved spouse; thou hast entirely possessed thyself of my heart, by that lovely unity which I see between thy pastors, and between the people that live in holy obedience to them. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices.*] Thy love to me and my commandments, O how amiable is it! how doth it endear thee unto me, my beloved spouse! How much more delicious is that love, which thy members have one for another, and for all men, than the best entertainments the world can give! How much more grateful are the rest of thy virtues, than the odours of the richest spices, even of those that are burnt at the altar! See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.*] Nor are thy words less pleasing than thy deeds, the honey that drops of itself from the comb being not more sweet, sincere, and pure, than thy doctrine, O my beloved spouse: which is the delicious food of young and old, of weak and strong, and most powerfully recommended to their affections by the famed holiness of thy life; which, like the strong perfumes that come from the aromatic plants of Libanus, fill all places with the delightful scent thereof. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*] For, as a garden well planted, watered, and defended, abounds with all sort of flowers, and with variety of pleasant fruit, so doth my well-beloved spouse, by the singular care and special providence of God over her, with all the fruits of righteousness; admitting none to her mysteries, but those who are pure and holy, and washed from all their defilements. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 13. *Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard.*] Which makes the several orders and ranks of thy young novices (such is the exemplary purity of their lives) look like the young sets of pomegranates, and other odoriferous fruit; such as the cyprus and spikenards, which are growing up into a paradise. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 14. *Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.*] Planted only with the like precious herbs, shrubs, and trees to those now mentioned; as saffron, sweet cane, cinnamon, with those that yield frankincense, myrrh, aloes, and the choicest spices: which are not more serviceable to our health or pleasure, than that rare composition of graces which is visible in the church, make her members acceptable unto God, and useful unto men. See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 15. *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*] Whose virtues are preserved in life and vigour by that heavenly doctrine, which flows from me as plentifully and perpetually, as waters do from those springs that break out of the high mountain Libanus: which run continually in a large stream; and, supplying all the gardens in the neighbouring places, keep them fresh and flourishing. See Annot. [*p*]

Spouse.

Ver. 16. *Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.*] O let not then the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and its manifold gifts, be wanting unto me: but breathe perpetually upon me, as the north and the south winds do upon this garden: and then shall I be a paradise indeed; and not only fill the world with the sweet odour of the knowledge of Christ; but take the boldness to invite him, the beloved of my soul, to come and reap the delightful fruits (ver. 13.) of his own care and labour. See Annot. [*q*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. *Behold, thou art fair.*] The Lord of the church is here introduced, describing the beautiful estate of it, under the person of a lovely virgin: whose elegant features are particularly represented to raise admiration

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and love in others, and to give the church the comfort of being so amiable in his eyes, whom no beauty can please but that which is Divine. And they are represented, by comparisons borrowed from the country: which was most suitable to a *bucolic*, or *pastoral* poem: as I have already said this is.

Thou hast doves' eyes.] And, first, her eyes are compared to those of a *dove* (for such reasons as are suggested in the Paraphrase), *when they are unveiled*, as those words *mibbaath letsammatech* may be translated; (of which see ver. 3.) unto which I have had respect in my Paraphrase as well as to our translation, where this phrase is rendered, *within thy locks*.

Thy hair, &c.] Then the hair of this virgin's head is compared unto that of goats, as the next passage is to be translated, by repeating the word *hair* in this manner; *Thy hair is like the hair of a flock of goats*. Thus the people of Israel are said to have brought for the service of the tabernacle, *scarlet, and fine linen, and goats*, that is, *goats' hair*, as we truly translate it, Exod. xxxv. 23. And in the next chapter, (ver. 13.) he made *curtains of goats* (where we supply the word *hair*) for the tent over the tabernacle, according as he had been ordered, (xxv. 4. xxvi. 7.) Upon which passages Abarbinel observes, that Moses makes no mention of *wool*, either of lamb or sheep; because that was vile and contemptible in those countries, in comparison with the hair of goats, which was wont to be shorn, not only there, but in other places: for Aristotle observes the same of the goats of Cilicia. And some of them had a wool, as we may call it, so fine, that it was almost as soft as silk: which was that the women spun for the use of the tabernacle, (Exod. xxxv. 26.) To this sort of hair, perhaps, there may be an allusion in this place, in regard of its *softness*, as well as length and thickness; which is a great commendation of hair in men and women.

But there was also a *coarser* or *harder* sort, with which they made locks and ornaments for the head, when they were bald, or would appear very fine: as Braunius hath observed, in his book about the priests' garments, (lib. i. cap. 9.)

And, in general, it may be observed of hair, that it was always accounted a very great ornament: which made Philostratus, in a letter of his to a youth whom he loved, beseech him by no means to cut it off, ὡς χρυσὸς, ἀνάθημα, καὶ ἄργυρος, οὕτω καὶ τρίχες κομῶσαι, *there being no less beauty in a good head of hair, than in gold, in silver, in pendants, and such-like ornaments*. Which he illustrates by what it contributes to the greatness of several other creatures, as the *lion* and *horse*, &c. and was notably expressed by Lycurgus, when he gave this reason, why he ordered in his laws that his citizens should take care of the growth of their hair, because it made *beautiful persons more comely, and deformed more terrible;* as Plutarch relates in his Apophthegms.

That appear from Mount Gilead.] Gilead was a mountain fit for goats to browse on, as may be seen in Bochart: which shews these last words of this verse should be thus translated: *that ascend from Mount Gilead*, to the higher parts, that is, of that mountain, or of that country.

I should have adventured to compare the apostles and prophets to these two *eyes;* who, being illuminated by the Holy Ghost (represented by a dove), and having no other aim, but sincerely to make Christ and his religion known in the world, resembled the *eyes of doves;* (see ii. 14.) but I did not know to what the *locks* and the *hair* could be handsomely applied; and therefore, I have looked upon these, and the rest that follow, only as parts of those things that make up together a perfect beauty. Theodoret hath made the aptest application, that I can find, which is this: that *hair* signifying what is superfluous, the meaning may be (if there be any of every particular in this description), that *even in human things, and worldly affairs, wherewith we cannot but be sometime perplexed, the church behaves herself laudably and preserves a decorum.*

[*b*] Ver. 2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep.*] Here follows a description of the *teeth;* which are a great part of the beauty of the mouth, as that is of the face. And their beauty consists in their whiteness; in their evenness and just proportion; and in their closeness and firmness: so that there be none wanting, nor any gap between them. Which are all here expressed, and said to be like a *flock of sheep come from the washing*, in respect of whiteness; and as equal as if they had been exactly polished and fitted for their places, in just proportion, by an artificer (so the word we translate *shorn* signifies); they that are below also answering to those above, as if they were *twins:* and none of them *miscarry* (so that which we translate *barren* should be rendered), *i.e.* drops out of the mouth; which is as much as to say, there is a perfect number, as well as order of them.

Now the *teeth* being the instruments whereby we chew our meat, they may be looked upon as an apt emblem of the inferior pastors in the church: who prepare Christian doctrine for the people. Which application, though I have not adventured to make in my Paraphrase (because I take these five first verses to mean no more, but only to set forth the loveliness of the church in general, by the figure of a virgin, of a most accomplished beauty), yet I shall here note, for the help of those whose thoughts lead them that way, that the virtues of such pastors are, *candour, purity, order, concord, exact agreement among themselves, one of them not seeking ambitiously to overtop the rest.*

[*c*] Ver. 3. *Thy lips*, &c.] In the beginning of this verse there is no great difficulty: it being certain that *schani* (the colour of the lips) signifies some very bright and resplendent colour, which strikes the eyes sharply (as it originally seems to import); *viz.* either *scarlet*, as we translate it, or *crimson*, or *purple:* such as the poets call *coral lips*. Whose fineness is here compared to a *thread;* and is another great part of beauty: as a sweet accent of the *voice* also is; nothing being more ungrateful than a tone that is coarse and clownish.

If any list to apply these particularly to something in the church, the *lips* may be thought to signify the teachers in the church, who delivered the doctrine they had learned from the higher ministers; who had prepared it for them, and, by them, for the people. And the *voice* signifies their excellent manner of preaching: insinuating into the hearts of those that heard them; being accompanied with great modesty and humility, though full of authority and power. Unto which only the last clause of this verse can be applied; which is this:

Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

Where two or three words puzzle interpreters. First,

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that which we translate *temples;* which are not reckoned as a part of the beauty of the face, especially being covered by the *locks:* and why they should be likened to a *slice of a pomegranate,* is hard to tell. Grotius, therefore, by the *temples* understands the *cheeks* (as the Vulgar doth), which, in regard of their redness, are like to the grains of kernels within a pomegranate. So the Chaldee, indeed, interprets the other word, a *piece of a pomegranate:* when he thus glosses, *they are replenished* (*viz.* just and pious men, to whom he applies it) *with precepts, as a pomegranate: i.e.* as a pomegranate is with kernels or grains with which it abounds, and to which that interpreter, no doubt, hath respect.

But our learned Dr. Castell hath, out of the neighbouring languages, more clearly explained both these words, and the last also: and hath made them all easy and natural, by shewing that the whole clause is thus most exactly translated: As the *flower of the pomegranate, so are thy cheeks without a veil.* So he translates the last words, which we met withal before, (ver. 1.) *mibbaath letsammatech,* not *within thy locks,* but *without a veil.* That is, When thy veil is laid aside, thy cheeks appear of a most lovely colour; for such is that of the pomegranate flower; the purest white and red, most exactly mixed. (Orat. 5. in Schola Theolog. p. 37.)

[*d*] Ver. 4. *Thy neck is like,* &c.] The *neck,* being compared to the tower of that goodly fortress, which David made upon Mount Zion, which overtopped all the rest of the buildings of the city of Jerusalem, denotes, among other things, the tallness of the whole body.

Built for an armoury.] This tower is said to be built *letalpijoth* (for *an armoury* we render it), which the LXX. knew not what to make of, and therefore retain the Hebrew word: and others do but guess at its meaning; having no certain rule, from whence to fetch its original. Aquila translates it *fortifications;* but Symmachus translates it *heights:* which last I have followed, adding another signification also derived from *alaph,* to *teach* or *instruct.*

Thousand bucklers.] This tower, it seems, was adorned with the *shields* and *bucklers* of those mighty men mentioned 1 Sam. xxiii. and such-like worthies: with which Grotius ingeniously compares those precious stones, which are wont to be the ornament of the neck. But what answers to this in the body of the church I know not; unless we admit the opinion of R. Solomon, and others of that nation, who will have this to be the place where the Sanhedrin had a room, called in their language *liskath haggazith, the chamber* or *parlour of square stones* (which some interpreters have thought to be the meaning of *built letalpijoth,* with square stones), where judgment was administered, and their discipline preserved; which was the strength and support of the nation, as the general council of the apostles and elders, mentioned Acts xv. was of the Christian church: who settled all doubts and controversies, as future councils were to do, and thereby maintained the church in order and peace. From which Theodoret doth not much differ, when he saith the church hath many shields, whereby it is defended. *For thou art armed with all the weapons of the Spirit* (saith he, paraphrasing upon these words), *whereby thou easily woundest thy enemies,* &c. *and sometimes doth refel them by the prophets, sometimes by the apostles; and layest open their weakness.*

[*e*] Ver. 5. *Thy two breasts,* &c.] The two *paps* rise upon the breast, like lilies from the ground: among which, if we conceive two red kids feeding, that were twins and perfectly alike, they appeared like the *nipples* or *teats* upon the paps, to those that beheld them afar off. Thus Bochart explains this comparison: which sets forth the exact proportion, and the pure complexion of the *breasts;* unto which, most think the two Testaments, the Old and the New, very aptly answer in the Christian church, just as R. Solomon hereby understands the two tables of stone in the Jewish. But they forgot that this is a description of the parts of the church (not of things belonging to it), and can be applied to nothing, that I can think of, but the two orders of preachers, that were, one among the Jewish Christians, and the other among the gentiles, as Gregory the Great expounds it: who think these are called *twins,* because of their perfect agreement and concord in the Christian doctrine: though one of them bent their endeavours most towards the conversion of the Jews, and the other of the gentiles. And, indeed, they that taught the first rudiments of Christian doctrine, went forth by pairs, as we read Luke x. where Christ is said to send them forth *by two and two;* to admonish them how necessary their concord was; and that they had need to be assistant, all they could, one to the other in such a difficult work.

[*f*] Ver. 6. *Mountain of myrrh,* &c.] Here now the description stops, and proceeds no farther to the lower members of the church: which are not particularly commended; but it is only intimated that, in conjunction with their guides and directors, they made up a beautiful body; though for the present obscured by the night of persecution, as the first words of this verse may be applied. Which body might be well compared to a *mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense;* that is, to Mount Moriah and Jerusalem, say the Hebrew (and so the church is called the *New Jerusalem* in the Revelation), where the sweet incense, made of these and other spices, (Exod. xxx. 34.) was continually burnt in the temple.

I know it is commonly thought, that other mountains (afterward mentioned, ver. 8.) are here meant: about which I shall not dispute. But only observe, that these two, *myrrh* and *frankincense,* were among the most precious spices of those countries (and therefore here mentioned), as appears by what we read in Athenæus, (lib. i. Deipnosoph. cap. 3.) who, speaking of the noble entertainments which were made by several persons that overcame in the Olympics, tells us, that Empedocles, being a Pythagorean, and eating no flesh, when he won the prize, caused an ox to be made of *myrrh* and *frankincense,* and other precious spices, which he divided among the spectators. And (cap. 8.) he puts these two among those things which were accounted τρυφὴ, *delicacy.* And Hermippus, relating what places were most famous for several things, saith, ἀπὸ δ' οὖν Συρίας λιβανωτὸν, *that frankincense came out of Syria,* (cap. 21.) The verses also of Archestratus (lib. iii. p. 101.) make mention of Syria, and say these were used for perfumes at feasts. The same I observe in other places of that author; and therefore have made the allusion here only to the preciousness of these things; which were no where so excellent as in those countries. And I have taken this verse to be still in praise of the before described beauty: for it is evident, from the following verse, he had not yet done with that matter.

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[*g*] Ver. 7. *Thou art all fair,* &c.] And here, to comprehend all that could be said, he enlarges the commendation which he began withal, (ver. 1.) and concludes in these words, that there was no defect in any part: but altogether they made up a complete beauty without the least speck of deformity. Which is not to be applied to every particular person in the church: but, as I have taken it in the Paraphrase, to the admirable constitution of the whole, in which there was no imperfection.

[*h*] Ver. 8. *Come with me from Lebanon,* &c.] Here now begins a new representation; as appears by this, that the style wherein the *bridegroom* speaks is altered; she who hitherto hath been called his *love* or *friend,* being now called his *spouse,* and never before: though very frequently in the following part of the Song. Which hath moved interpreters, I suppose, to use this name throughout, rather than the other: as the higher and most excellent title.

Theodoret, therefore, here begins his third book very judiciously: and we may look upon this as a description of the church, coming out of the state of persecution: and receiving greater testimonies of her Saviour's love than ever. For coming from the top of high *mountains,* where there were *lions' dens,* and where *leopards* inhabited, cannot well signify any thing else, than coming from places where they were in danger to be devoured by their persecutors, who are compared to *lions* in many places of Scripture.

As for the mountains themselves, they are well known where they were. Only *Amana* some have fancied to be that mountain in Cilicia called *Amanus:* which is reckoned among the highest; and joined by Ælian with Libanus and Carmel. We read also that there were tigers and panthers, &c. in this mountain; which hath been brought to countenance this opinion. But Judea and the neighbouring places being the scene of this poem, we are not to go so far off as Cilicia to seek for Amana: for, as Shenir and Hermon were but parts of the same mountains; so Amana was a part of Libanus, as Bochartus hath observed in his Canaan, (lib. i. cap. 5.) And though the lower parts of this mountain Libanus was very pleasant, yet the top of it, which is here spoken of, was horrid, and inhabited with wild beasts. From whence the *spouse* is invited to come into more delightful and secure places: for she is compared presently after to a *garden* or *paradise,* (ver. 12, 13, &c.) And it is no wonder Solomon should have the state of the Christian church in trouble thus represented to him; it being very suitable to the state of the church of the Jews, when it was first formed; being then pressed by Pharaoh, and many other enemies afterward, before they came to Canaan.

[*i*] Ver. 9. *Thou hast ravished my heart,* &c.] The first word of this verse, *libbavtini* (which is not to be found any where else), signifies some extraordinary motion in the heart. And is translated by some, *Thou hast wounded my heart;* by the LXX. (which we follow) *Thou hast taken away my heart:* but may as well be translated, *Thou hast taken possession of my heart;* and deeply engaged my affection. Which is expressed by the addition of another name for her whom he called *spouse* in the foregoing verse, and here also calls *sister.* Which is only a word of tenderness and endearment, used by husbands to their wives; as appears by the book of Tobit; where Raguel calls his wife Edna his sister, (vii. 16.) and Tobias calls Sara by the same name, after he had married her, (vii. 4. 7.)

One of thine eyes, &c.] All the difficulty here is, what may be thought to be meant by *one of her eyes, and one chain of her neck.* Some take *eyes* to signify faith and charity; others, the church of the Jews and gentiles; and then *one eye* must signify one glance, one look, of the eyes: but nothing pleases me better than the old interpretation of Alcuinus, who by the word *one* understands *oneness,* or *unity:* and by the *eyes,* (as ver. 1.) the pastors and guides of the church: and by the one *wreath of hair about the neck,* the pious unity of the people subject unto them.

It may be interpreted also, *the least glance I have of thee and of thy beauty, mightily engages my love to thee;* for the eyes are the very *seat of love,* as abundance of authors express it.

[*k*] Ver. 10. *How fair is thy love.*] The *love,* or rather *loves* (as it is in the Hebrew), which is here extolled, may signify our love to God, and unto one another. And *ointments* be applied to all the graces which flow from thence.

[*l*] Ver. 11. *Thy lips distil,* &c.] That which distils from the lips, as honey from the comb, can be nothing but pure and most delicious doctrine; delivered in such a manner, as to invite all to taste of it. For this by all sorts of authors is compared to honey; and made Xenophon be called the *Attic,* and Sappho the *Pierian bee:* because of the sweetness of his orations, and of her poems. When the rare eloquence of Plato is said to have been predicted by *bees,* which came and sat in his mouth when he was an infant: which is reported also, by no mean authors, of Pindar, Lucan, and St. Ambrose.

Honey and milk are under thy tongue.] This signifies the same thing; for these were anciently the food of infants; and may denote that the church hath instruction for all sorts. So wide from the truth is the exposition of the doctors in Maimonides, (Porta Mosis, p. 83.) that this milk and honey being said to lie under the tongue, signifies the concealment of such truths as are very sweet, till men be fit to receive them.

The smell of thy garments.] *Garments,* wherewith we are clothed, signify, in the New Testament, our whole conversation: and their *perfume* therefore denotes not only the excellency of the Christian life; but its being known also every where.

Like the smell of Lebanon.] From the trees in the forest of Lebanon came many sweet spices; particularly frankincense; from which some think it took its name of *Lebanon;* though others think rather from *laban,* white, because of the snow that lay perpetually upon the top of this mountain.

[*m*] Ver. 12. *A garden enclosed.*] In the forest about this mountain Lebanon, Solomon built himself a house; which we find described, 1 Kings vii. 2, &c. unto which, no doubt, there belonged a garden, with springs, and fountains, or receptacles of water; and all sorts of trees, and plants, and flowers, that might make it delightful. Unto which, I conceive, he hath respect in this and in the following verses.

I know that very good authors think he here describes a perfect virgin, *like a garden newly enclosed, in which no seed hath been sown:* as the doctors speak in Pirke Eliezer: (cap. 21.) which hath made some Christian writers apply this to the care of the church, to preserve herself pure and undefiled, &c. But it is more agreeable to what goes before,

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and follows after, to expound it as Theodoret doth of the church bringing forth not only the fruits of godliness and virtue, but all sorts and variety of fruit; like an excellent garden: and therefore guarded by the singular care and providence of her Lord and owner, from tyrants and heretics; who, like wild beasts or thieves, would destroy or deflower her.

A spring shut up, &c.] The same meaning hath *a spring shut up*, and *a fountain sealed;* that the waters may be preserved from dirt and filth: which cannot be thrown or fall into them, to trouble them, and make them muddy, when they are so secured; but they flow purely. And, indeed, in the prophetical language, the flourishing condition of the church, after it hath been in affliction, is set forth by the planting of a wilderness, with all sorts of the best trees; and by making fountains break forth, and waters flow therein, (Isa. xli. 18, 19. li. 2.)

The LXX. (according to the Vatican copy, and that which Theodoret follows) and the Vulgar Latin, take the second comparison here to be the same with the first; reading it thus, *A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a garden enclosed*, &c. (just like ver. 9. 11.) reading, it seems, in the Hebrew, *gan, a garden*, where we now read *gal, a spring*. But this doth not at all alter the sense, and therefore need not trouble the reader.

It is possible that in the last words of the verse, a *fountain sealed*, there may be a description of the Christian *font*, or baptism: to which none were admitted, but such as sincerely renounced all wickedness; resolving and promising to lead a holy life. Which sense Theodoret may be thought to have expressed, when he saith, the church is compared to a *fountain sealed*, ὡς μὴ πᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀξίοις προκειμένην, *as not lying exposed to all comers, but only to those who are worthy*. Though his next words seem to confine this passage to the mysteries, in the other sacrament of Christ's body and blood; which they only that are already initiated in the Christian church can partake of; and not after their initiation wallow again in filthiness; but live accurately, or purify themselves by repentance, if they fall into any sin.

St. Cyprian makes use of this verse, to prove the *unity of the church*, not only in this book upon that subject, but in several of his Epistles; saying, *If the church be a garden enclosed, and a fountain sealed; how can any man enter into that garden, or drink of that fountain*, who is not in the church? &c. (Epist. 69. 74, 75. edit. Oxon.)

Cotovicus, in his Itinerary, says, that there is a fountain three miles from Beth-lehem southward, called by this name of *fountain sealed:* to which he went, and was told, that water still runs from thence in pipes to the place where Solomon's temple stood. But he himself intimates, that herein he follows an uncertain report.

[*n*] Ver. 13. *Thy plants*, &c.] By these *schelachim, young plants*, or *shoots* and *scions* (as the word signifies), we may well understand those whom the apostle calls νεόφυτοι, who had newly received Christianity; and are here represented as a goodly *nursery of pomegranates*. A fruit in that country very delicious, and no less useful many ways: for it was of a grateful smell, and had a winy juice, very refreshing; and therefore much desired in those hot places. Theodoret also thinks that hereby is set forth, the great variety of Christians in the church; or, as his words are, *the many orders of Christians that shall be saved*. For there is one order of *virgins;* another of *widows;* another of *married people;* as there are also, *rich* and *poor, masters* and *servants*, &c. who all have their several places and stations in one and the same church; as the grains of the pomegranates lie in their several *cells*, and distinct *closets* (as they may be called), and yet are all contained in the same shell, and all compose one body.

Camphire] Of *Copher*, which we translate *camphire;* see chap. i. 14. where it is joined with *nard*, as it is here. Of which *(i. e.* of *nard)* there were several kinds; and therefore a word of the *plural* number is here used; as a word of the *singular* in the beginning of the next verse; which we in English express by the same word *spikenard* in both places.

[*o*] Ver. 14. *Saffron, calamus*, &c.] Most of the names of these fragrant shrubs or trees which we read in the Hebrew text, are the very same with those now in use in our and most other languages. The first of them, *carcom (saffron)* being not much different from *crocus*, from whence that mountain in Cilicia called Corycus had its name; where the best crocus in the world then grew. The next *canna* (which we translate *calamus*) is a sweet cane or reed. *Cinnamon* also retains the same name: as do *myrrh* (which grew only in the midst of Arabia among the Sabeans) and *aloes*, which dropped from a shrub in those countries; and was reckoned among the *prime spices*, as the last words of this verse are very well translated.

Chief spice.] In the Hebrew the words are, *the top* (or *the head) of aromatics:* which signifies the most excellent spices. Just as the *top of myrrh*, Exod. xxx. 23. signifies the best and purest myrrh; and the *top* (or *head) of oil*, Psal. cxli. 5. the most excellent oil. I shall only note farther, that *frankincense, myrrh, calamus, cinnamon* (called there κίνδος), are thus joined together by an ancient poet in Athenæus, lib. ix. cap. 15. Where Mnesimachus, in a poem of his called Hippotrophos, making a description of a great supper, which was a marriage feast, saith at the end of it,

Ὀσμὴ σεμνὴ μυκτῆρα δονεῖ
Λιβάνου, μάκρου (it should be κρόκου, I suppose) σμύρνης, &c.

Where σεμνὴ (the attribute of smell) which we commonly translate *venerable;* and is so rendered in the ancient Glossary, signifies *most excellent*. For by that word the LXX. translate the Hebrew *negidim*, Prov. viii. 6. *excellent* (or *princely) things*. And so noble was the smell which the spices gave, that the poet saith it *shaked the nostrils; i. e.* strongly affected them, and stirred up in the brain a brisk sense of pleasure.

I do not think fit to seek for any thing in the church, particularly answering to every one of these excellent spices, as interpreters do: but look upon them only as representing in general the incomparable virtues of the church, and its acceptableness unto God. Or, that there are in the church all things necessary to salvation: for rare unguents, and other compositions, were made of the blossoms, fruit, or seeds of these shrubs: conducing much to health and long life.

[*p*] Ver. 15. *A fountain of gardens*, &c.] This verse Theodoret judiciously connects with the foregoing; after this manner: ἔχει δὲ καὶ πηγήν, *and it (i. e.* this *paradise* or *orchard*, as we translate it) *hath also a fountain*.

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A fountain of gardens, and wall of living waters] Are the same thing; as Bochartus hath observed in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18. Where he shews that *beer*, which we translate *pit* or *well*, signifies a fountain, as much as *maajan*. Libanus abounds with such springs (as all great mountains do), and particularly there is at the foot of it an excellent spring, which grows presently into a river, that waters the whole plain between that and Tripolis, with a good stream, whereby the vineyards, olive-yards, fig-yards, and gardens, which there were very numerous, were all supplied. Unto which Theodoret compares the evangelical doctrine, (according to that of our blessed Saviour's, John iv. 10. 14.) only he adds also the law; making *fountain* and *well* in this verse two distinct things; and by the latter imagining the law to be denoted, because things lay there deep and secret, as in a pit.

[*q*] Ver. 16. *Awake, O north wind,* &c.] The same great person thinks the *north wind* is here commanded to arise, merely that it might be gone (as being pernicious to fruit) and give place to the *south wind*, which is only invited to *come* and *blow upon the garden*, with its soft, gentle, and benign breath. But most interpreters take it otherways; and some imagine that these two, being the most vehement winds in those countries, are called upon to *blow;* that by their strong shaking of the aromatic plants, they might make them send forth their odours the more plentifully. But it seems more reasonable to think, that these two winds were most profitable in their turns, for these two purposes. First, the *north wind* was useful to close the pores of the trees, and shut up their effluviums; that they might not spend themselves too much, and be exhausted by perpetual evaporation: and then the *south wind* coming in due season, opened and relaxed them again: making the aromatic gums drop freely; and the sweet odours fly more actively abroad.

And if this garden to which Solomon here alludes, had the same situation which the maps and charts give to that at Jerusalem (which they place on the east side of the city, having the wall on the west), these two winds here mentioned were those which alone were desirable. The east being biting and blasting, not only in Egypt, (Gen. xli. 6.) but in Judea also, (Ezek. xix. 12.) and in Assyria; (Jonah iv. 8.) and therefore they defended their fruits against it, that they might not be exposed to it.

Let my beloved come, &c.] There is no doubt but this conclusion of the chapter is the voice of the *spouse*, praying her beloved to favour and prosper his own plantation, for his sake as well as for hers, that he might not lose what he himself had designed, and so happily begun and settled in such beautiful order; but take the pleasure of seeing it grow to perfection.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

The first verse belonging (as was said before in the Argument of the fourth chapter) to the foregoing representation; a new one begins ver. 2. which, continuing to the end of this chapter, makes the fifth part of this pastoral. Wherein is represented how soon our spirits flag, and grow weary of the most heavenly delights; nay, how drowsy the best minds sometimes are, and how insensible of God's love. For the *spouse* is introduced (ver. 2, 3.) as in a slumber; and not so ready, as formerly, to comply with his gracious motions. At which the *bridegroom* takes not such distaste, as to leave her in that dulness; but awakes her out of it, to such a lively sense of her negligence, that she applies herself to seek his favour with greater earnestness than ever, (ver. 4—6.) The sense of which, though she could not presently recover, (ver. 6—8.) yet she expresseth the greatest passion for him, and the highest admiration of him: in a rare description which she makes (ver. 10. to the end of the chapter) of his beauteous excellences and perfections.

Bridegroom.

Ver. 1. *I AM come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*] I am well pleased to see the fruitfulness of my garden, and therefore have not denied thy request, my tenderly beloved spouse; but am present in it, and have brought it to such perfection, that it hath produced many excellent persons more precious than myrrh, and all the spices beforenamed: with whose service I am not only well pleased, but rejoice in the purity of their doctrine, and of their lives; inviting all that bear any love to me, both in heaven and in earth, to rejoice and to be exceeding glad together with me. See Annot. [*a*]

Spouse.

Ver. 2. *I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*] I heard these gracious words, though I was not perfectly awake, and knew it was his voice, and not the voice of a stranger, (John x. 5.) which called upon me, and that with importunity, (Rev. iii. 20.) saying, Give me free admission into thy best affections; why dost thou delay, who art so very dear to me, so entirely beloved by me, who hast consented to love me above all things, and to keep thyself holy and undefiled by loving me alone: which I have long desired; and taken much pains, and endured great hardships, to win thy love. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*] But so stupidly dull and drowsy was I at this time, that I did not answer his kindness, as it deserved: but made unmannerly excuses, and desired I might not be disturbed, now that I was taking my repose, and could not without difficulty leave my bed, and my beloved rest; the sweetness of which I had begun to taste. See Annot. [*c*]

Ver. 4. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.*] And yet such is the kindness of him who is worthy of all love, he did not presently leave me to myself, but first raised me out of my slumber, by letting me know he was not well pleased with me; and making me sensible of the danger of such delays: which put me in such a commotion, that I was in great anguish of mind, and even quivered and shaked with fear, and grief, and sorrow. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands*

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dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.] Whereby I was not quite dejected; but only excited to shake off my sloth, and to make the more haste to acknowledge his goodness, and embrace his gracious motions to me: unto which I applied myself with zealous endeavours, resolving to entertain him with the most ardent love, and with the highest expressions of my esteem of him and of his favour. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*] But, though I thus repented of my negligence; yet, see the lamentable effects thereof; for when I had thus disposed my heart, and set it wide open to receive his commands, my beloved had withdrawn his gracious presence, and was gone quite away out of my sight: which made me even sink down and die with fear, that I should not recover him again; especially when I called to mind those many words of grace, wherewith he made his addresses to me; calling me (ver. 2.) his sister, his love, his dove, his undefiled: with which I was now affected too late; for I sought him diligently, but could not find him; I beseeched and entreated him to return, but received no answer from him. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*] This, though it was very bitter to me, yet did not utterly discourage me, but still I continued to seek him every where, as I had done heretofore; (iii. 3.) but they who formerly instructed me, and directed me unto him, now fell upon me with grievous reproofs, nay, reproaches for my fault; which cut me to the very heart: nay, they whose office it was to preserve the city of God in peace and safety, exposed me to open shame, and the foulest disgrace. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.*] So I turned myself to those of my neighbours and familiar acquaintance, who were awakened by my cries to come and see what the matter was; and conjured them, as they would answer it to God, that if they met with my beloved, they would let him know—what shall I say? what shall I desire you to tell him? but that I do not enjoy myself, now that I want his company: nor can be well, till I recover his love again. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?*] And some of them had so much compassion upon me, as to interest themselves so far in my sorrows, as to inquire into the cause of them: and how they might be assistant unto me in their cure: for they asked me, Wherein doth thy beloved excel other excellent persons? he is very lovely, no doubt, because beloved of thee, who art the most amiable of all other women; but what is his pre-eminence, wherein do those, who are worthy of the greatest love, fall short of him? that thou art thus solicitous about him, and layest such a severe charge upon us, to assist thee in thy search of him? See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.*] To whom I replied, My beloved is that great Son of David, of whom you have heard: who is of a princely form, having admirable beauty and sweetness, mixed with equal majesty and brightness; dazzling the eyes of those that behold him; chose by God to do the greatest things; and bring all nations into his obedience. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.*] And therefore wears a crown of pure gold upon his head; from whence his curled locks hang down upon his brow; which are of such a shining black that they add an excellent grace and greatness to his royal beauty. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.*] His eyes are sparkling, and yet mild; like those of milk-white doves, when they are highly delighted, as they sit by the river's side, or other places where there is abundance of water. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 13. *His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.*] The lovely down also upon his cheeks is no less grateful; rising there like spices when they first appear out of their beds; or like the young buds of aromatic flowers in the paradise before described: where the purple lilies are not more beautiful than his lips; from whence flow words more precious and more pleasant than the richest and most fragrant myrrh. See Annot. [*n*]

Ver. 14. *His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.*] And as he hath the majesty of a prince, so he hath the compassion of a priest: and therefore clothed with such a vest as the high-priest wears when he ministers before God, and is adorned with the ephod unto which the breast-plate with all its precious gems is constantly annexed. See Annot. [*o*]

Ver. 15. *His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.*] His thighs also are covered with fine linen, which makes them look like pillars of the whitest marble; over which the holy robe is thrown, with golden bells at the bottom of them: all which are so contrived for beauty and glory, that his aspect, when he appears in these flowered vestments, is no less stately and great than the forest of Lebanon; whose goodly cedars do not more excel all other trees, than he doth all other men. See Annot. [*p*]

Ver. 16. *His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*] So you would say, as well as I, if you did but hear him speak, or if he did but breathe upon you; and, to say all in one word, there is nothing wanting to make him the desire of all nations; nor any thing in him but what is desirable: and therefore do not wonder, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that I am thus concerned about him, and restless till I find him; for this is the true portraiture of my beloved, this is the character of him who, by owning me for such, gives me leave to call him, *my friend.* See Annot. [*q*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. Unto that invitation which is made by the spouse in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, the bridegroom here gives an answer: and testifies his acceptance,

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by coming to taste the fruit of his garden, nay, to make a feast in it; of which he calls his friends and companions, after the manner of those countries, to be partakers. His receiving fruit from his garden is expressed in these words, *I have gathered my myrrh*, with the rest of the spices mentioned in the former chapter. Then follows the feast (which they always made when they gathered the fruits of the earth), in these words, *I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey*, &c. Which is put instead of all other things, because it was one of the greatest entertainments of those countries. As appears from hence, that it was among the presents sent to Joseph when viceroy of Egypt, (Gen. xliii. 11.) and brought to David by the great men of the country, as part of his provision, while he dwelt among them in his banishment, (2 Sam. xvii. 29.) and is mentioned also by Homer as the entertainment which Hecamede gave Nestor and Patroclus; before whom she set *green*, or *fresh*, *honey*.

And as that comprehends all royal dainties that were to be eaten, so *wine* and *milk* all the liquors at the feast: whereby is represented the joy he took in the fruit of his garden. In which joy he would have all good men, and angels themselves, (Luke xv. 7. 10.) to participate in the highest measure; that their joy, as our Lord speaks, might be full. For that is the meaning of *Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

I have not adventured to be very particular in specifying the things to which these expressions may be applied; but have only mentioned the evangelical doctrine, and the good works of Christians. If by *myrrh and spices*, any special thing be designed, I should think it is the *martyrs;* who offered up themselves most acceptable sacrifices unto Christ, and made greater joy in heaven than the mere repentance of a sinner could do. And the joy that Christ took in such victorious souls as laid down their lives for him, nay, did but heartily entertain his doctrine; is expressed by their feasting with him, Rev. iii. 20.

The last words, *eat, O friends, drink*, &c. may soberly be applied to the eucharist: where we feast with Christ on his sacrifice, and he feasts with us, beholding our love to him and one to another.

[*b*] Ver. 2. Here now begins a new *scene* or part of this pastoral Song; wherein Solomon represents himself as having lost that clear sight of the Messiah, which he had in the foregoing vision, chap. iii. 4. (for they could not always keep up their minds to such a pitch of contemplation.) But falling into a trance, thought he heard his voice (though he saw not his person) speaking to his spouse. Whom Solomon conceives to be in the same condition, wherein he then was himself; and to hear those words spoken, (ver. 1.) between sleeping and waking. So the first words of this verse signify, *I sleep, but my heart waketh:* the same with those of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 4. *falling* (asleep) *but having my eyes open.* In which condition the Greeks describe their Saturn; of whom they say, κομώμενος ἔβλεπε καὶ ἐγρηγορὼς ἐκοιμᾶτο, *sleeping he saw, and waking he slept.*

She having therefore but an imperfect sense of his kindness to her, and presence with her, he awakens her to attend more livelily to his love; which he was desirous more fully to discover; and therefore calls upon her by more names of endearment than ever. For here are *four* put together, the following rising still higher than the foregoing. And he represents (after the manner of lovers) what he had suffered to gain her affection: which seems to me to be the meaning of the last words, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* Wherein he is represented as a beautiful Nazarite, having bushy hair, and many locks (as Samson had), who having travelled all night to visit her, was thereby very wet. For there were two sorts of dew; the *morning dew*, which was soon gone, (Hosea xiii. 3.) and that *dew which fell in the night*, and lay long, and wet those who were in it very much: whereby it signified in Scripture, hardships and great afflictions, (Dan. iv. 25.)

There are those indeed who, by *dew*, understand the evangelical doctrine, by which innumerable souls were begotten unto Christ, as David prophesied, (Psal. cx. 3.) But this is not agreeable to what follows; and their reason for this exposition is not true, that *dew* is always taken in a good sense: for I have shewn the contrary: and *the dropping* of the prophets (a metaphor taken from *dew*) is their prophesying *against a place*, and threatening judgments to come upon it, (Ezek. xxi. 2. Amos vi. 16.) which makes me think that Solomon here rather alludes to the last verse of the hundred and tenth Psalm (if he had that Psalm in his eye), which predicts the troubles and afflictions of the Messiah, *by drinking of the brook in the way.*

If this exposition of this difficult verse be not allowed, it may be supposed that the Messiah is here represented as coming in the person and condition of a poor man, to beg entertainment, and having not any where to lay his head (as our Lord speaks), was thereby exposed to the cold air, &c. Which will make this a commendation of charity to the church; shewing also the danger of neglecting it.

[*c*] Ver. 3. And then this verse agrees perfectly with what we read in the parable, Luke xi. 7. Where the good man of the house was unwilling to be troubled, even by his friend, that came to beg his assistance, when he was going to compose himself to rest. But I take it to be a description of the dulness, which is sometimes apt to creep upon the most excellent minds; who in some tempers are so listless, as not to be much affected with the best motions that are made to them. Of which infirmity Solomon, having had many examples in the history of his own nation, might well conceive the spouse herself to be backward to entertain that grace which was offered to her.

There are no difficulties in the words; which signify plainly, that she, having composed herself to rest, and being half asleep, was unwilling to be disturbed. For going into bed, she had put off her clothes, and washed her feet, as the manner was, that no filth, which they had contracted in the day-time (they wearing sandals only, not shoes as we do), might foul the sheets: and it would have been a trouble to do all this over again; which is the meaning of the last words, *How shall I defile them? i. e.* I cannot easily persuade myself to it.

I shall only, therefore, set down the pious note of Theodoret upon these words: "Let us learn from hence, what mischief sloth and laziness do, and in what troubles and pains they engage us. For the spouse here excusing herself, and not being willing presently to rise to the bridegroom, is compelled a little while after, not only to rise and run down to the door, but to run through the city, and wander about the streets, and fall among the watchmen, and by

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them to be wounded; and after all could scarce find her beloved: to whom, if she had presently hearkened, and obeyed his heavenly call, she had avoided all these inconveniences."

There are those, not only among us, but also in the Romish church, who apply all this laziness to the state of the church after the time of the great Constantine. For which I see no warrant; but think we may rather apply it to those churches, who, presently after our Saviour's departure to heaven, left their first love, and grew cold, as we read in the second and third chapters of the Revelation. For it seems probable, by the sixth chapter of the book in the beginning of it, that here he speaks of particular societies, not of the whole body of the church.

[*d*] Ver. 4. Yet, such is the infinite goodness of the Divine Nature, he immediately represents the Messiah, as not provoked by this neglect, wholly to cast off his spouse; but rather stretching forth his hand to awaken her out of this security. For so it follows, *He put in his hand by the hole; i. e.* at the *window*, or *casement;* as if he would draw her out of her bed: or, as it may be interpreted, in a threatening manner, to punish her for her sloth. For so *putting forth the hand* signifies, to do some execution, 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. 11. 23. Which agrees with what follows, that presently she was mightily moved thereby, and more than awakened, being full of solicitude, and fear, and grief, and trouble. Which shews, indeed, that she did not intend to deny, but only to delay him: and yet he took this so ill, as to put her in great fear of some danger from it, (as our Saviour doth in his letters to the churches, Rev. ii. 5. 16. 22, 23, &c.) For the word *bowels* signifies the affections and passions; and the Hebrew word *hamu*, which we translate *was moved*, signifies *made a noise*, or *was tumultuous:* and therefore denotes the passion of trouble and grief, and of fear also; nay, of great fear and perplexity. For so St. Jerome here renders it, *My belly trembled;* as he doth in Ezek. vii. 16. where it is applied to doves, (to whom the spouse was here compared, ver. 2.) and we translate it *mourning;* but it should be rather *trembling like doves.* For that is their nature, (Hos. xi. 11.) all authors observing them to be exceeding timorous: and therefore so it may be translated here, *I was so full of trouble, that I quivered like a dove.*

Others by *putting forth the hand*, understand the touches he gives by his Holy Spirit: which doth not contradict what I have said; threatenings being employed by him for that purpose.

[*e*] Ver. 5. And having had this glance of him, (whose voice only she heard before, ver. 2.) she starts up immediately, and endeavours to correct her error. And is here represented as making such haste to open the door, that she broke the vessel of myrrh, which she snatched up, when she rose; intending therewith to anoint, and refresh his head, which was wet with dew. Or rather her hands shaked in that panic fear wherein she was: and so she spilt some of the myrrh, and it ran about her fingers. By which is denoted the great speed she made to shake off her sloth, now she saw her danger; and the fear that came upon her, lest she should lose her beloved: to whom she now resolved to express the greatest affection imaginable. For it was not barely *myrrh*, (which was one of the most excellent spices, John xix. 39.) but the most *precious myrrh*, which she took up to carry to him. So *mur ober* signifies; which we well translate *sweet-smelling myrrh:* but, word for word is *current myrrh.* Either in that sense wherein money is called current, (Gen. xxiii. 16.) as some fancy; or, as Rasi thinks, because the spirit, that is, the odour of it, diffused itself round about the place where it was; that is, was exceeding fragrant: or, as Bochart will have it, was that which *wept* (as they speak), and dropped from the tree of itself; which as it was the most unctuous, so was the richest and best for all manner of uses. See his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 22. And besides this, Theophrastus observes, that out of myrrh, being beaten, there flowed an oil, called στακτὴ, which was very precious: as I find in Athenæus, lib. xv. cap. 11. And accordingly the Chaldee and Aquila translate *ober* in this place, *choice* myrrh; Symmachus πρωτεῖαι, the *prime*, from whom the Vulgar, the *most approved myrrh.*

[*f*] Ver. 6. But notwithstanding her repentance, she was thus far punished for her sloth, that her beloved absented himself from her, for a time: and she could not hear the least tidings from him, or notice of him. Which cast her into such an excess of grief and fear, that she swooned away, and was like a dead body, (so that phrase, *my soul went forth*, signifies to die, Gen. xxxv. 18. xlii. 28. and other places.) And recovering herself again was extremely troubled, by the reflections she made upon his kindness, and her insensibleness of it. For which she asked his pardon, and sought his favour; but could receive no tokens of it.

[*g*] Ver. 7. I take *watchmen* here in a good sense, as before, iii. 3. unto which I refer the reader. And only observe, that *to find* a person, signifies sometimes in Scripture phrase, as much as to fall upon him, as we speak; and that on a sudden, Judg. i. 5. Psal. xxi. 8. cxix. 143. Isai. x. 10. And so I have expounded it here; and referred the smiting and wounding her, to the reproaches they cast upon her. For there is a smiting with the tongue, as well as with the hand; and that not only by enemies unjustly, (Jer. xviii. 18.) but by friends out of love and charity, (Psal. cxli. 5.) For there is not a greater kindness, than sometimes even to upbraid us with our faults. Which is farther expressed by *taking away her veil* from her; as much as to say, exposing her to shame: a veil being thrown over women's faces for modesty's sake, as well as in token of subjection, (Gen. xx. 16.) And so St. Jerome in his epistle to Læta, takes this *veil* or *pallium*, as he calls it, to be *pudicitiæ signum, a sign of chastity*: and therefore, to take it away, was to represent her as an impudent, whorish woman. Greg. Nyssen adds that it was περιβόλαιον νυμφικὸν, (Hom. xii. upon this book) *the nuptial veil*; which, together with the face, covered the whole body: and therefore to be disrobed of it was the greater reproach; because it was to disown her to be his spouse, as she professed herself.

[*h*] Ver. 8. This verse is very plain, expressing the admirable temper of a true penitent: who leaves nothing unattempted to recover the favour of her Lord (for finding no comfort from the watchmen, she implores the help of all good people), and yet doth not complain of what she suffered, nor of the harshness of those, who should have helped to restore her; and not dealt so severely with her; (according to that of the apostle, Gal. vi. 1.) but only bewails

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the loss of his presence, and represents that, notwithstanding, she had not lost her love to him; but rather that it was so great, she could not live without him.

It must be confessed, that there is no necessity of reading those words which we translate, *that ye tell him*, by an interrogation, *What will you tell him?* as the Hebrew seems to import (for the particle *mah* doth not always denote that); but it adds much to the life of the speech, and represents her passion to the height, if we so translate it; as I have taken it in the Paraphrase.

[*i*] Ver. 9. In this verse the daughters of Jerusalem reply to her; and being touched with a pitiful concern for her (whose admirable beauty discovered itself to them, in this wretched condition wherein they saw her), they desire to have a character of her beloved; that they might be the better able to know him if they met him, and be the more excited to help her to seek for him, when they understood his deserts.

[*k*] Ver. 10. In this part of the character, which now follows of him, Solomon seems to me to have had his eye upon the person of his father David, (1 Sam. xvi. 12.) whose very aspect promised much, and shewed that he was born to rule. And whether we translate the first words, *white and ruddy*, as in our Bible; or as Bochartus, *white and shining*, or *glistering* (making *adom* not to signify *ruber*, but *rutilus*, and the whole to be as much as *summe candidus*, exceeding fair and of a pure complexion), it matters not. For it only signifies, in my opinion, the majestic beauty of his aspect: which David himself had also described in those famous words, (Psal. xlv. 2.) *Thou art fairer than the children of men.*

And then, in the latter part of this verse, he hath respect, as I take it, both to what they sang of his father David, after he came from his victory over Goliath, (1 Sam. xviii. 7.) and to what David himself sang of this great Prince in Psal. xlv. 3, 4, &c. and more largely, Psal. cx. 2, 3. 5, 6. which all relate to the conquest of the world unto him: and is signified in his expression of his being *chief* (or *lifting up the standard*) *over ten thousands:* that is, over great multitudes, or armies, (Psal. iii. 6.) The LXX. translate it, *Chosen out of ten chosen:* unto which I have had respect also in the Paraphrase. As for mystical significations, some think by *white and ruddy*, is meant his Divine and human nature; others, only his humanity, &c. (as may be found in interpreters), but I have not dared to meddle with them. And shall but just mention the fancy of the cabalists, who understand hereby the effects he works in us. For sometimes he dispenseth himself in mercy and kindness; and then, say they, he is *white:* sometimes in the zeal of justice, and with anger; and then he is *red.*

[*l*] Ver. 11. Now being thus represented as a king, he is next described as having a crown upon his head. So I understand *cethem* (which we translate *gold*), as Rasi doth; who takes it for a *diadem:* and, indeed, in other places of Scripture it signifies some precious ornament, as Prov. xxv. 12. Now this crown upon the head is said to be such a one as David had mentioned before, (Psal. xxi. 3.) of *pure gold.* In the Hebrew *of Paz;* which Bochartus (both in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27. and in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 46.) shews was the island anciently called Taprobana; in which the footsteps of this word *Paz* remained in Ptolemy's time. Who mentions in that island the river Phasis, and the creek or bay Pasis.

The same excellent person, in his book of Sacred Animals, (par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 10.) shews that, in the latter part of this verse, we are to understand by *kevjzoth (locks)* the foretop, or the hair coming down the forehead; which is expressed in the next word, *tultalim, hanging down.* And this foretop is only mentioned, because little else appeared, when the head had the crown on it.

This hair is said to be as *black as a raven;* because such shining black hair was accounted majestic, and much affected in those countries: insomuch, that they endeavoured by art to make their hair of this colour; and, as Pliny informs us, employed the eggs, the blood, and the brain, of ravens for that purpose. They looked upon this coloured hair also as a token of courage and fortitude; and, with a pure clear complexion, it was very lovely.

There are several mystical applications made of this: which I had rather the reader, who hath a mind to them, should seek in others, than find here.

[*m*] Ver. 12. The plainest meaning of this verse, is that of the LXX. and Vulgar Latin: which is to the same effect with that I have set down in the Paraphrase. For *washed* and *sitting* do not refer to the *eyes*, but unto *doves:* who love to *sit*, nay, to *tarry* (as the word imports), by rivers' sides, and other places which abound with water; and are then so pleased, that their eyes appear very quick and lively. And such piercing eyes, adding much to majesty, they are here made a part of this glorious person's character.

Washed with milk] Signifies *doves as white as milk:* which are most lovely; and when they have washed themselves, look as if they had been in milk.

As for the common sense which the Hebrews give of this verse, and which most modern interpreters follow; Bochartus, in the beginning of his second part of Sacred Animals, seems to me to have evinced, that the Hebrew words will not bear it. But it is fit to mention it, and it amounts to this; that his eyes were *clear and white, and full set* (or set in perfection, as Aben Ezra here interprets the word *milleth*), like a diamond or precious stone in a ring: neither too much depressed, nor too prominent; but handsomely filling the sockets. And if this were the natural interpretation of the last phrase, *Joscheboth al milleth, sitting or dwelling by fulness or fillings;* I should think there might be an allusion to the precious stones in the pectoral of the high-priest, which are said to be *set in their fillings*, Exod. xxviii. 17. 20. But this phrase doth not refer, as I said, to *eyes*, but to *doves*, that sit by places abounding with water; or, as Avenarius will have it, "ad vas plenum lacte," *by a vessel full of milk.*

The mystical application of these *eyes* to the doctors of the church, seems impertinent; because they are described before in the eyes of the spouse, (iv. 1.) Rather, therefore, his exact care and providence over the church, which nothing can escape, may be hereby represented: for he sees into the very heart and reins, as he himself affirms, Rev. ii. 18. 23.

[*n*] Ver. 13. This verse is so difficult, that it is a hard matter to give an account of it. The plainest seems to be this; that by *cheeks* we are not to understand those that are smooth, but wherein the hair begins to grow: which added

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much, in those days, to the goodliness of any man, and was looked upon as a token of vigour, strength, and courage. And it may aptly be compared to the *flowers*, or the *sproutings* and *buddings* of plants and trees. So I understand *migdaloth* (which we translate *flowers*) to signify *buds*, putting forth like little *towers*.

The *lips* may seem unfitly compared to *lilies:* because white lips are not beautiful. But Almonazir hath observed out of Dioscorides, Theophrastus, and Pliny, that there were lilies of a purple colour. And besides, I find in Pliny (lib. xxi. cap. 5.) mention made of a lily (which he calls *rubens lilium*), which was much esteemed, he saith, in Syria. He shews there also a way how to make purple lilies.

There are those who think Solomon compares the lips to lilies, only in regard of their fineness and delicate softness: thick, blubber lips, being very unhandsome, and a sign also, they say, of dulness and making the speech less graceful. And, indeed, eloquence is sometimes described by lilies; and may be here meant.

Concerning *sweet-smelling myrrh*, see ver. 5.

And thus far we have only the description of an amiable, gracious majesty; which is much advanced by a sweet voice and eloquent speech. The mention of which may well put us in mind of what is said of our Saviour, Luke iv. 22. compared with Psal. xlv. 2.

[o] Ver. 14. If we understand the first part of this verse to be meant of the hands, it is thus to be interpreted, *He hath golden rings on his fingers* (as before he is said, ver. 11. to have a golden head, *i. e. a crown of gold* upon it), *set with the chrysolite;* as *tarsis* (which the LXX. here do not translate), it is most probable, signifies. And then the latter part of the verse sounds thus, word for word; *his belly is of polished ivory, covered with sapphire: i. e.* is purely white, streaked with blue veins. But who sees not, that though this be ingenious, yet it is not true? For the body is no where *covered* (as the word here is) with veins: which must needs signify more than *streaked* here and there. And, besides, it is not only against the rules of decency, but against the very scope of this discourse, to fancy that any of those naked parts of the body are here described, which are not commonly exposed to every body's view. For the spouse is desired to tell by what marks this person might be discovered, (ver. 9.) Now he could not be known by any of those parts which lie concealed and hidden from all men's eyes, being industriously covered. And therefore no such hidden parts are here represented; because he could not thereby be known and distinguished.

I conclude, therefore, that now she proceeds to describe the habit of this great person. And Solomon having in his mind the *idea* which his father had given him of the Messiah, in the hundred and tenth Psalm (where he is said to be a Priest as well as a Prince), represents him in the habit of the high-priest. Who, among other noble vestments, had an *embroidered coat;* the *sleeves* of which, the Hebrews tell us, came down to his very wrists; nay, as Maimonides saith, as far as to the hollow of his hand. Which I take to be here meant by *his hands* (which comprehend the *arms* and *shoulders*), that is, the clothing of those parts. And these *sleeves*, as well as the whole coat, were *embroidered*, (as you read, Exod. xxviii. 4.) to make the high-priest appear the more glorious. And if you ask what this *embroidery* was, the Hebrews tell us, that part of it consisted in a kind of *eyelet holes*, finely wrought. And R. Solomon Jarchi expressly saith upon that text, that *they were holes made in gold rings, in which were fixed precious stones*, &c. (as is afterward said of the stones of the ephod, ver. 11.) Which so fully explains these words, *his hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl*, that I need seek no farther. Though I have sometimes thought that the *ephod* itself might be here intended: which being fastened upon the *shoulders* (which, in order, after the head, eyes, cheeks, and lips, come to be here described, and are comprehended, as I said before, under the name of *his hand*), hung down before and behind to the bottom of the back: and had *two gold rings*, unto which the breast-plate was fastened, as we read Exod. xxviii. 27, 28. Maimonides saith it had *four* rings, two above, at the jewel-buttons; and two below, about the girdle of the *ephod*. Which was one of the principal ornaments of the high-priest when he ministered; the other, and the greatest of all, was the *breast-plate* hereunto annexed; and, as they say, was to be inseparable from the ephod.

Now this *breast-plate* is meant, as I take it, in the latter part of this verse. Where under that word which we translate *belly*, and properly signifies *bowels*, is comprehended the *breast*, and all: which this *coschen*, as the Hebrews call it, covered: and, as it covered those parts, so it was itself covered, or *overlaid* with *twelve* precious stones. The *sapphire*, which was the *tenth*, is only here mentioned; but it is usual in Scripture, to touch only upon one thing in a history, when the whole is intended. And besides, it is evident, from the foregoing part of this verse, that more must be understood, when one alone is mentioned: for *rings* are spoken of in the plural number, and said to be filled with *tarsis;* which must therefore denote more stones than one; as *sapphire* doth all the rest of the *twelve* which could not be mentioned in so short a description. Or *sepphirim* here, in the plural number, may signify stones as precious as the *sapphire*. Certain it is the Chaldee paraphrast thought there was some respect here to the high-priest's *breast-plate;* for he mentions all the stones therein, one by one. Which may make this interpretation of mine to seem less strange. And I conceive the *sapphire* to be here mentioned rather than any other; because it is of the colour of the heavens, and fittest to represent the sublime dignity in which he is now described. For the pavement under the feet of the God of Israel, when he appeared unto their nobles at Mount Sinai, was of this colour, (Exod. xxiv. 10.) and so was the throne of God in the firmament, which Ezekiel saw, (Ezek. i. 26.)

Nor need it seem strange that the *belly*, upon which this covering was, is said to be of *polished ivory* (when there is no mention of any such thing in the law), for it only denotes that it was as shining and bright as that: and may possibly relate to the tunic or coat of fine linen, wherein the high-priest was to minister, (Exod. xxxvii. 39. xxxix. 27.) especially upon the great day of expiation, when he was not to put on his robe, nor his fine linen coat, with any embroidery, but of fine linen alone, (Lev. xvi. 4.)

The LXX. seem to think it was the breast-plate itself (which indeed was very shining), for they translate it πύξιον: which shews they meant some covering of the belly, which was hollow, as the breast-plate was. Which I doubt not is the *covering of sapphires* here mentioned: it being set, as you read, with twelve large precious stones, wherein were

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engraven the names of the twelve children of Israel. And was the most precious part of all the high-priest's habit; and therefore more commonly called by the Jews an *ornament*, than a *garment*, or any part of his vesture: the whole of which was contrived *for glory and for beauty*, (Exod. xxviii. 40.) *i. e.* that God might be served most magnificently.

[*p*] Ver. 15. Next in order follows the description of the *thighs;* that is, of the garments upon the thighs: which were the very first that the high-priest put on, when he went about to clothe himself for his ministry. And are here said to be made of *schesch:* which is a word common to *fine linen*, and to *pure white marble*, (so the LXX. twice translate it *Parian marble*, Esth. i. 6. 2 Chron. xxix. 2.) which the *breeches* of the priest resembled, being made of *byssus*, or pure fine linen; a thing of great price in those countries, as appears both by Pliny and Pausanias. The latter of which authors, in his Eliaca, mentions this among the rare things (which were worthy of admiration) in that country, and saith, *It was not inferior to the byssus of the Hebrews.* Who were ordered to make this part of the priest's garments of *twined fine linen*, (Exod. xxxi. 28.) which rendered them the more substantial; and made them sit the fuller and stiffer, like *pillars.* For the Hebrews say they were made of *six-thread byssus:* and that they came down to the knees, where they were not gathered at the bottom, but sat open.

Below which *breeches* came down the holy *meil*, or robe, upon the skirts whereof hung round about bells made of pure gold, (Exod. xxviii. 34.) Which may possibly be the basis of fine gold, here mentioned, to which the *femoralia*, or garments on the thighs, reached. Some refer all this only to his stately gait and princely motion; others to his strength and firmness (which lie much in the thighs), and his ability to march against his enemies, and pursue them. And then the sockets of fine gold are his *sandals*, bound upon his feet with golden ribands, or something of that nature. The reader may choose which he thinks most probable, for the explication of the first part of this verse: *His legs* (or *thighs* rather) *are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold.*

Now if my conjecture be allowed, then the latter part of the verse will not be hard to explain. For this and all the rest of his habit being contrived for *beauty and glory*, as was said before from Exod. xxviii. 40. it made the high-priest appear with unusual majesty: the riches of these vestments being not easily to be valued. And so his *countenance*, or rather his *aspect*, his *whole appearance* (as the Hebrew word may signify), *was as stately as Lebanon.* Which was one of the goodliest sites in those countries, both for cedars and many other things; especially after Solomon had made his garden there, of which we read in the foregoing chapter, ver. 15, 16.

Unto which lovely forest and garden, the appearance of the high-priest may be the better compared; because there were flowers, as well as pomegranates, if we may believe Philo (in his third book of the Life of Moses), wrought in the bottom of the holy robe. Which the LXX. also affirm in express words; that there was ἀνθινὸν, a *flowery work*, as well as pomegranates and bells in the hem of the *meil*, (Exod. xxviii. 34.) And, indeed, the pomegranates being made of wool of divers colours, they themselves might look like divers sorts of flowers. And, besides this, it is to be observed, that several other parts of the high-priest's habit are peculiarly commended to be made of a work called *chescheb*, which we translate *cunning work.* Thus the *ephod* is ordered to be wrought, (Exod. xxviii. 6.) and the *girdle* of it, (ver. 8.) and the *breast-plate*, (ver. 15.) Which some translate *artificial*, others *ingenious work:* and all agree to have consisted in certain beautiful figures of flowers and animals; and in variety of colours. The *girdle*, moreover, is ordered to be made of a work called *rokem*, which we translate *needlework*, (ver. 39.) because it is thought not to have differed from the former, save only in this; that the other things were only woven curiously, but this also curiously wrought with the needle. The Jews give another difference; that this was wrought so that the figures appeared on both sides, the other only on one. About which I shall not trouble myself; but only take notice that Josephus (in his third book of Antiquities, chap. 8.) explains this verse thus, *Flowers were woven in this girdle, with scarlet, purple, blue*, &c.

And if *flowers* (as others say, *animals*), then, in all probability, *trees* also were wrought in these priestly vestures: which made the fuller representation of a forest. Among which that of Lebanon was the principal, and, indeed, the most beautiful place in all those countries; which made the prophet express the glory of the church in these words, *The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it*, (Isa. xxxv. 2. see also Hos. xiv. 5—7.)

Some think that hereby only the tallness of his stature is denoted; which was always looked upon as a princely thing, as it was in Saul.

As for mystical applications of these two verses, there are none to be sought for, if I have given the true sense of them, but such as relate to the excellency of Christ's everlasting priesthood; and its pre-eminence above the other, as much as the cedar excels all the trees of the forest.

[*q*] Ver. 16. There is little difficulty here. For *mouth* (Hebrew *palate*, which is within the *mouth*) can signify nothing but either his *words* which come from thence, or his *breath.* And words being mentioned before, ver. 13. the latter is probably here intended. Which is said to be *sweetness*, nay, *sweetnesses:* denoting the perfect soundness of the internal parts; as the foregoing description sets forth the excellent shape, and stately vesture of the outward: it is applied by interpreters, to the purity of Christ's affections and passions: but may be, as well, to his breathing upon his apostles, when he bade them receive the Holy Ghost. Which included, in a manner, what he did upon earth, as it doth his description in this place. For she, finding his praises to exceed all her thoughts, sums up all in a breath; and comprehends his whole character in this: That he is all over lovely; attracting all men's affections; not only those that saw him, but those that heard of him too.

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

In the foregoing description, the spouse expressed such an unfeigned affection to him, (which she again confidently asserts in this sixth part of the Song, ver. 3.) that it not only mightily moved her companions to join with her in the search of him, but invited the return of the bride-

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groom again. Who graciously declares the like affection unto her (from ver. 4. to 11.) in such words as shewed that his kindness remained unalterable; and that he delighted in none but her: as incomparably more amiable, even by their own confession, than all those beauties whom the world most admires. With which kindness she is so ravished, that it snatches her away from the dearest friends she had, though very desirous of her company, (ver. 12, 13.)

Companions (or Daughters) of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *WHITHER is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?*] These are high commendations indeed, which thou givest to thy beloved, which make us in love with him, as before we were, (iv. 9.) and still are, with thee, O thou most lovely of all other women: whither dost thou think he hath betaken himself? He is not quite gone away, sure, but only diverted into some retirement: which way did he go? And where dost thou guess he hath hidden himself, that we may go along, and inquire him out, with thee? See Annot. [*a*]

Spouse.

Ver. 2. *My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.*] I heard my beloved say, that he was gone down into that garden, which he himself hath planted; (v. 1.) there he delights to be, among those pious persons, whose virtues make them like to the garden-beds, that are full of spices: he is always present in every part of this happy company; and hath fellowship with them; and is daily adding more and more pure and sincere souls, who are without all guile, unto their society. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.*] Of which I, being a member, hope I may still say, that he hath not cast me out of his favour; but still retains a kindness for me: because I am steadfast and faithful in my love to him; who takes a constant care of such as study to resemble him. See Annot. [*c*]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 4. *Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem; terrible as an army with banners.*] It is true, O my beloved friend, who art still dear unto me, and most amiable in my eyes: I have not lost my esteem of thee; for I see thou hast not lost thy affection to me: nor that lovely, that decent, and comely order, which makes thee not only beautiful, but venerable; nay, amazes all beholders, or, at least, strikes them with great admiration of thee. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me; thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.*] Thou needest not look so earnestly, and with such care and solicitude, upon me, as if I had forgotten thee: for I see the same sparkling beauty in thy eyes, which I did before, (iv. 1.) and it no less affects my heart; (iv. 9.) thou wantest none of those ornaments which I formerly commended, but retainest them all, notwithstanding the discomposure in which thou hast been. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.*] The same I say also of thy teeth, which are still white and clean; even set both above and below; firm and sound also; without any breach, or want of so much as one of them. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.*] And, to be short (and not to repeat every thing again), I see the same fresh colour in thy cheeks; which makes thee look as lovely now thy veil is off, (v. 7.) as thou didst in the first blooming of thy beauty. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.*] Wherefore, though other kings and princes of these countries have a great many queens, and more wives, of an inferior rank, and virgins that attend them, without numbers: whose beauty they highly admire: See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: the daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.*] I have one only, and none other, whom I entirely love; and that is thyself alone: who preservest an inviolable faith and affection to me, and therefore art dearer to me than an only daughter (and she the most accomplished person and perfect beauty) is to her mother: whom all other persons at last shall admire; the queens themselves beforenamed call thee blessed, and wishing all prosperity to thee; and they of the next degree shall praise thy excellences, and confess their own imperfections. See Annot. [*i*]

Ver. 10. *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?*] Saying, What an astonishing beauty is this, that appears like a clear morning after a dark night, and increaseth in lustre more and more; looking as bright as the moon when it is at full; nay, as splendid as the sun when it shineth in its strength: and no less dazzles our eyes, and amazes our thoughts, than a glorious host of heaven; or an army here on earth, when it stands in battalias, with all their colours displayed! See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.*] Only this I expect from thee, that thou bring forth fruit proportionable to my care of thee, and kindness to thee: for to that end I went down before, (v. 1. vi. 2.) and now go again into my garden (which I have not neglected to dress, and prune, and water), to take a view in what condition it is; and in what forwardness the several sorts of fruit are, which I justly look to receive in their due seasons. See Annot. [*l*]

Spouse.

Ver. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib.*] Alas! what am I, that I should receive such praises, who am not worthy of thy care! But have put such motions into my soul, as to make me aim at the highest perfections; and make all the haste I can likewise to attain them: and therefore I must, for the present, take leave of you, O my friends, who have kindly assisted me in the search of my beloved. See Annot. [*m*]

Companions.

Ver. 13. *Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.*] Let us have thy company again, O thou fairest and most accomplished of all the daughters of Jerusalem. Come back again,

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come back, that we may behold thy wondrous perfections. And if any ask, What is that you would see? What would you enjoy in her happy society? Our answer is, Such a Divine presence as appeared to Jacob, when he saw the angelical choirs; which made him cry out, *This is God's host*, and call the name of that place Mahanaim. See Annot. [*n*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. The daughters of Jerusalem (mentioned v. 8.) here justify what the spouse had said in the conclusion of the former chapter: and declaring themselves in love with him whom she had described, are desirous to join themselves to her company, and go in quest of him. In order to which, they would know whither she thought he was gone when he went from her.

[*b*] Ver. 2. Unto which she replies in this verse, and seems to tell them, in his own words, what she had heard him say about that matter, (v. 1.) And it signifies that he was still in his church, and in every part of it; though sometimes they were not sensible of it. For so Theodoret well observes, here is a distinct mention made of a *garden*, and of *gardens*, *i. e.* of the catholic church, which is but one, and of the several parts thereof. For sometimes St. Paul mentions only the *church* in the singular number, and sometimes the several churches even in the same nation, (as in the Epistle to the Galatians, i. 1.) and in the same province, or city, (1 Cor. xiv. 34.)

He is said here to *go down* into his garden, with respect to the mountains, mentioned iv. 8. And to *feed*, in the Hebrew, is either to do the office of a shepherd to his flock; or relates to his communion with his people, mentioned iv. 16. v. 1. Which may be the meaning also of *gathering lilies:* or, as Theodoret will have it, by this last clause is to be understood, his gathering holy and pure souls that are like to him, and joining them unto his church. And so the Arabic translation is, *to gather together the lilies;* following the Septuagint, who translate it, συλλέγειν. And, indeed, I find the Hebrew word *lakat*, signifies to collect things into a heap or bundle; as stones, (Gen. xxxi. 46.) manna, (Exod. xvi. 27.) fruit, (Lev. xix. 9.) silver, (Gen. xlvii. 14.)

The whole denotes, that communion with him is only to be sought in his church: especially in that part of it which preserves the order, wherein he hath disposed all things (like the walls and beds in a garden), and kept themselves also in the purity of his religion.

[*c*] Ver. 3. Now she seems to have so perfectly recovered herself out of the slumber wherein she had been, as to have regained her former sense of him, and of her interest in him: repeating those words which we met withal before, (ii. 16.) Of the latter part of which [*he feedeth among the lilies*] I think fit here farther to note, that *to feed* may relate either unto himself, or unto others; for there are examples of both. Of the former, Gen. xli. 2. Job i. 14. Of the latter, Gen. xxix. 7. 9. xxxvii. 12. I take it here rather in this latter sense, and suppose it signifies his doing the office of a shepherd: and that he is said *to feed among the lilies*, as in the Revelation, *to walk in the midst of the seven candlesticks; i. e.* there to have his conversation, to take up his abode with them, &c. as he often says in the gospel of St. John, (xiv. 23.) that he would with those who love him and keep his commandments.

And such persons are here compared to *lilies;* which being a name given by Christ to himself, Greg. Nyssen and Theodoret hereby, not unfitly, understand, such as are conformed to Christ their head, and have his image wrought in their souls, in righteousness and true holiness. For, saith the former of them, ὅσα ἀληθῆ, &c. *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,* &c. (Philip. iv. 8.) ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ κρίνα, *these are the lilies in which Christ delights.*

[*d*] Ver. 4. And now we must conceive, either that they went to the garden together, and there found him; or that he hearing this hearty profession of unmoveable love to him, meets them: and, to revive her drooping spirits, falls again into a new commendation of the spouse; in the very same terms as before, and in some higher.

And, first, he compares her to Tirzah, which was a beautiful situation in the country of Ephraim; and therefore made choice of after this time, by Jeroboam, for the seat of his kingdom: and so continued till the building of Samaria, as we read 1 Kings xiv. 17. xv. 21. 23. and several other places: to which add, Josh. xii. 24. The very original of the word signifies as much as *urbs amabilis*, or *a city that pleaseth one:* and therefore chosen by one of the ancient kings of Canaan for the place of his residence.

And lest this should not be high enough, he next compares her to Jerusalem, which was the most lovely place in the territories of Judah, and indeed of the whole country. For which cause, as it had been the seat of one of the kings of Canaan, so the royal palace of David, nay the house of God himself, was afterward there built: and is called by Jeremiah in his Lamentations, *the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth,* (ii. 15.) It is mentioned by Pliny, likewise, (lib. v. cap. 14.) as the most famous city in the east.

And as she had commended him before, not only for his beauty, but majesty; so he doth here, in the last place, call her *terrible as an army standing in battalias;* striking an awe, that is, into beholders. So I think it is to be expounded, as referring still to the goodliness of her aspect, and not to her being invincible, inexpugnable, and striking terror into her enemies; as some interpret the whole verse. Every part of which seems to me to be a new proof, that Solomon speaks not in this book of one single person (whom some fancy the Shulamite, others Pharaoh's daughter; whom others take for one and the same) under the name of the spouse; but of a body or society of men: for none else can be fitly compared to cities, nay, to great armies drawn up under their banners. Which last part of this verse may be applied to the comely order which Christ appointed in his church; which, while it was preserved, made the church very venerable in the world. So Theodoret, ἐκπλήττονται γὰρ, &c. *For they are astonished who behold thy order, there being nothing disorderly, nothing uncertain or undetermined, nothing confused and indistinct: but all* τεταγμένα καὶ κεκριμένα, *orderly appointed, and judiciously determined.*

Some refer this *terribleness*, as we translate it, to the *gravity*, or rather *severity*, of her countenance, which forbade all wanton approaches to so great a beauty.

[*e*] Ver. 5. In this and the following verses he seems to

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descend to a particular description of the several parts of her beauty: as he had done before, (iv. 1, 2, &c.) And he doth it in the very same words, for the most part, to assure her, that he had still the same esteem of her, and kindness for her: and that, notwithstanding what had happened, it had not altered her so much as to abate any thing of his affection; or to make her appear otherwise in his eyes than she had done. This seems to me to be the true reason of this repetition: others are given by Theodoret and other authors.

And first he begins with the commendation of her *eyes*, as he had done iv. 1. (though in other words.) For so the first clause of this verse may be translated, *turn thine eyes towards me:* the Hebrew phrase signifying, not only to turn one's self from another, but sometimes to turn towards them; as 1 Chron. xii. 23. And then we are to conceive that he speaks to her, as one ashamed to look upon him; whom she had so much disobliged: and bade her take more confidence, for he was still in love with her.

If we follow the common translation, I take the sense still to be the same: that she need not trouble herself any farther; for she had prevailed in her suit to be restored to his favour. The looking of the eyes towards one, is as much as entreating and petitioning: which he tells her she might cease, by bidding her turn her eyes away from him.

It is most ordinarily taken for an amorous expression: as if he had said, her eyes were so bright and dazzling, he could not bear the passion they excited.

Of the latter part of the verse see an account upon chap. iv. 1.

[*f*] Ver. 6. There is no difference between this verse and that in iv. 2. but only in one word; which alters not the sense. And as *harechelim, sheep*, was to be fetched from hence to supply the sense there; so another word, *hakketzuboth, even shorn*, is to be fetched from thence to supply it here.

[*g*] Ver. 7. This is also exactly the same with the latter end of the third verse of the fourth chapter. The LXX. have also the first part: but they might as well have added all that there follows: which is here omitted.

[*h*] Ver. 8. Here, most think, Solomon alludes to the number of his own wives; who were fewer, they suppose, in the beginning of his reign: (as Bochartus himself gathers from these words, in his epistle to the now Bishop of Winchester, p. 126.) and that then he composed this Song, before he let the reins of his lust so prodigiously loose, as afterward we read he did, (1 Kings xi. 1, &c.) But it is not at all likely that he had so many as are there mentioned, while his mind was filled with such Divine raptures as these: and therefore I suppose he alludes to the custom of other princes in the east, who, besides their principal wives that were solemnly espoused and endowed, had also another sort who were neither; and yet were wives, called by the Hebrews *philagshim, concubines*. And such a difference the Romans anciently made between her whom they called *matrona*, who was only taken in marriage, and her whom they called *materfamilias*, who was taken also to order and govern the family, and whose children inherited. As may be seen in Aulus Gellius, lib. xviii. cap. 8. wherein he confutes Ælius Melissus, a conceited grammarian, who had started other ungrounded notions of these words.

And then *threescore* and *fourscore* are only a certain number for an uncertain; not the precise number of these wives and concubines. Theodoret thinks by these are mystically intended several ranks of Christians in the church: some more, some less perfect: but they discourse better, in my opinion, who rather accommodate those to the several sorts of heretical and schismatical churches: some of which gloried in the multitude of their followers, and in their wealth and splendour: but Christ hath only one catholic church, more glorious than them all put together; as it follows here in the next verses. And that, in effect, R. Solomon Jarchi, and some other Hebrew expositors, understand these words with application to themselves. Abraham and his posterity, say they, till the descendants from Israel, were threescore in number (compared here to queens). The sons of Noah and their descendants unto Abraham, were fourscore (compared to concubines). The rest who came from Cham, Ishmael, and Esau, could not be comprehended under a certain number. And so the meaning is, whatsoever kindness God had for the rest of Abraham's posterity, or of Noah's (not to mention Cham, Ishmael, and Esau), yet I have chosen, saith God, my people Israel, whom I have espoused to myself, by circumcision, and by the law, and by sacrifices, &c.

[*i*] Ver. 9. This verse needs not much explication: wherein the spouse is opposed to all the forenamed beauties: who are constrained to confess her pre-eminence. The Hebrew word for *one*, signifies also *only:* and an *only* child is as much as a beloved child: as appears by this, that μονογενὴς, *only begotten*, and ἀγαπητὸς, *well-beloved*, are words of the same import in the New Testament. And if such an only daughter be also *barah (choice* we translate it, or) *pure*, as the word originally imports; free from all blemish (that is, a perfect beauty), it makes her still more dearly beloved.

It is in vain to inquire here, who is the *mother* intended in this place: for his love is only compared to the *love* of a mother towards such an only daughter; who hath engrossed, as we speak, all the excellent qualities that are in any other person. Which forced the daughters to admire her (so *saw her* signifies, they looked upon her with admiration), and the queens to bless her, and the concubines to proclaim her praises. Thus, it is most likely, the latter part of this verse should be interpreted, *The daughters saw her, and the queens blessed her, and the concubines they praised her.* For though the Jews now have otherwise distinguished the words by their accents, yet Maimonides, I observe, distinguishes them, as I have done, in his preface to Seder Zeraim.

St. Cyprian, from this and such-like places of this book, (iv. 8. 12. v. 1.) proves there is but one only holy catholic church; making this observation, (Epist. 73. edit. Oxon.) *We see one person every where mentioned*, and no more; *because the spouse also is one*, &c.

[*k*] Ver. 10. This some take to be the beginning of a new part of this Song: and Theodoret, in particular, here begins his fourth book of commentaries upon it: but I look upon these words as the praises and commendations which the queens and concubines, beforementioned, bestow upon the spouse, with admiration and astonishment at her transcendent beauty.

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They need no explication, being of known signification; only it is fit to note, that to make the elogy more magnificent, the speech grows and increases. For though the *morning* be very beautiful and agreeable to every eye; yet the *moon* is still more bright, and the sun far brighter than that: but *all the host of heaven* (which I take to be meant in the last words) still more wonderful and amazing. For there being a gradation in this place, and all the other expressions relating to the heavens, it is reasonable to think that this doth so too: and that we are to understand by it the *armies or host of heaven* (as the Scripture calls the stars), rather than armies upon earth. However, I have put both into the Paraphrase, but have not meddled with mystical applications: they that desire them may look into the commentaries of three fathers, where this verse is applied to the four degrees of Christians that are in the church. Others, with more reason, apply it to the progress which the church herself made in splendour and greatness: being, at first, like the *morning* when the day breaks, after a long night of ignorance: and then the light of Christian knowledge advanced, till the church appeared like the *moon* (whose paleness may serve for an emblem of the terrors which persecution struck into their hearts), till, in the issue, it dispersed all mists, and, conquering all opposition, shone like the *sun:* and then was settled in Constantine's time, like a well-ordered army, which beat down all idolatry.

They that would see more of these applications may look into Commenius's book de Bono Unitatis; in the beginning whereof there are applications of these things, both unto the church in general, and unto particular churches.

[*l*] Ver. 11. This seems to be the voice of the bridegroom declaring what returns he expected to his love. The word *agoz*, which we translate *nuts* (of which there were several kinds, some very rich, as the *pistick*), is found only here: and by some is translated *shorn* or *cut;* which I have not omitted in my Paraphrase. And *beibe hannachal (fruits of the valley)* the LXX. translate *shoots by the brook*, or river, where plants are apt to grow best: which is very agreeable to the original. The rest of the words are common: and the whole verse signifies, that he went to look after the fruits of all sorts. The mystical applications may be found in all interpreters.

[*m*] Ver. 12. The meaning of this verse seems to be, that the spouse, hearing such high commendations of herself, both from him, and from the persons mentioned ver. 10. with great humility, saith, that she was not conscious to herself of such perfections (for so the first words sound in the Hebrew, *I did not know it*, or *I did not think so*), but is excited thereby to make the greatest speed to endeavour to preserve this character he had given her; and to go along with him into his garden, (which she had neglected before, v. 2.) there to give a good account of her proficiency. For which end she seems on a sudden to take leave of her friends (who had been so charitable as to go along with her to seek him), that she might for some time enjoy his company alone: which is the ground of their calling upon her to return, in the next verse. This is the best account I can give of these two last verses.

It is supposed Ammi-nadib was some great captain, who pursued his victories or advantages very industriously with very swift chariots.

[*n*] Ver. 13. This verse is the voice of her companions, or friends; some of which wish for her coming back, that they might enjoy her company again, and see how she was improved: and the rest asked what they expected to see in her? to which the other reply in the last words, *as it were the company*, &c.

The repetition of the word *return*, four times over, expresseth their vehement affection to her, and their desire to have her company again; whom they call Sulamith: as much as say, Jerusalamith: for the name of that place formerly was Salem, which carries peace in its signification; or, as others will have it, *perfection:* for *Shalam*, in the second conjugation, signifies to *finish*, or *perfect*. And is a fit name here for the church, the *New Jerusalem*, built by Christ himself. This seems to me a great deal more probable than the conjecture of Menochius, (lib. iii. de Repub. Hebr. cap. 21. n. 14.) who, because wives, when they were married, took the name of their husbands, thinks the spouse from Solomon had the name of Sulamith, which Aquila translates εἰρηνεύουσαν, *pacific*, i. e. *Solomonidem*. The reader may follow which he likes best. Solomon seems to me not to have had respect to his own spouse in this Song.

To *see*, or *look upon her*, signifies to enjoy her happy society; and the benefit of her excellent virtues and perfections. Whom, in the two last words, he seems to me to compare unto the choirs of the heavenly hosts. For the word *mechola* doth not signify any kind of *company;* but of such as dance or sing: as may be seen in Exod. xv. 20. xxxii. 19. Judg. xi. 34. Jer. xxxi. 4. Lament. v. 15. and many other places. Which shew that it signifies both *chorea*, a dance, and *chorus*, the company that dances: and so the LXX. here translate it, χοροὶ, *choirs*. And *Mahanaim* (which we translate *two armies*) may as well be a proper name as Ammi-nadib in the verse foregoing: and relates to the appearance of angels to Jacob, (Gen. xxxii. 2.) as a token of God's special presence with him; and most livelily sets forth the far more glorious presence of God now in the Christian church. Or if we interpret it *armies*, or hosts, as we do, still it may signify the armies above in the heavens; either the stars or the *angels*, called *the armies in heaven*, Rev. xix. 14. and *army of heaven*, Dan. iv. 35.

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins, as I take it, a new part (which is the seventh) of this Song; and reaches to the eleventh verse. In which the spouse is represented returning again, as they desired in the end of the foregoing chapter: and, appearing in greater lustre than before, the company of friends who attended her praise her beautiful perfections; in such a description as was made of them in chap. iv. though varying from it in several things (which is the sum of the first nine verses). Of which perfections she modestly acknowledging her Lord to be the author, and assuming nothing to herself, (ver. 10) is excited thereby only to do the more good, and to labour to extend his empire over more hearts; who were not yet subject to him, ver. 11, &c. where the eighth part of this Song begins, and continues to the fifth verse of the next chapter.

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Companions (or Daughters) of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.*] And now that she appears again, like the daughter of the great King, in all royal apparel, (Psal. xlv. 13.) who can choose but admire the beauty of the meanest thing belonging to her! The very shoes of thy feet are most lovely; and so are all the ornaments of thy thighs, which were made by no common or careless artist, but by one that hath herein shewn the best of his skill. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor; thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies.*] Which other excellent artists have equalled in that part of thy vesture, which covers the middle of thy body: in the very centre of which is a fountain; within a curious work, rising up like a heap of wheat, encompassed round about with lilies. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.*] Above which, thy two breasts rise up so purely white and exactly round, and every where of such just proportions, that two young kids which were formed together and brought forth at the same time, are not more like one another, or more lovely than they. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. *Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looked towards Damascus.*] Thy neck also lifts up itself, with the same or greater beauty, wherein we before beheld it, (iv. 4.) being no less smooth and purely white, than it is straight and well-shaped. And the same famous pools at the great gate of Heshbon, also, are not more quiet and clear than thy eyes: which are as pure and free from all perturbation, as they are fair and large: between which thy well-proportioned nose rising up, adds as much beauty and majesty to thy face, as the tower of Lebanon (whose top shews itself above the trees) doth to that noble forest. See Annot. [*d*]

Ver. 5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the King is held in the galleries.*] And now that we take a view of thy head, we seem to be come to the top of Mount Carmel; which is not more richly adorned by nature than its excellent form is by art: which hath contrived the most royal ornaments for it, and made thee an object fit for the king's affection; who, beholding thee from his palace, is fixed in contemplation of thy beauty. See Annot. [*e*]

Ver. 6. *How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*] Which cannot be described, but only admired; and constrains all to say, O how happy art thou! and how happy are they who are acquainted with thee! for what beauty is like to that, or what pleasure comparable to those which thou impartest to them that are in love with thy delights! See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*] Whose tall and upright stature adds much to all this beauty; and makes thee resemble the goodly palm-tree: within whose boughs those clusters hang, to which we may compare thy breasts between thy arms. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.*] Which seem to be stretched out to receive us into thy embraces, and invite me and all my company, with a joint resolution to say, We will take hold of the boughs of this tree: we will get up into it and taste of its fruit: and now shall be happy indeed; and enjoy those sweet delights which flow from thy breasts, and from the breath of thy mouth; far more refreshing and comfortable than the choicest fruit that this good land affords. See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*] For the richest and most generous wine, which, when we have tasted, we say, Let it be sent to the best of friends, is not more comfortable to the bodily spirits, though it be so powerful as to make old men brisk, nay, to enliven those that are at the point of death, than thy words are to raise and restore the souls of those who imbibe the sense of them into their minds. See Annot. [*i*]

Spouse.

Ver. 10. *I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.*] If there be any thing in me that is pleasing to you, and deserves such praises, ascribe it all to him from whom I received it; for, as I have often said, I am his entirely, and he is pleased to be entirely mine, having espoused himself unto me with great desire, (Psal. xlv. 11.) See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.*] And O that he (without whom I can do nothing) would accompany me in the charitable design I have, to go and visit other people, besides you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem! Let us go, my beloved, unto those poor despised people that live in the fields and country villages: let us not only go to them, but dwell among them. See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.*] Let us diligently visit the vineyards that have been newly planted there, and bestow our utmost care upon them: let us see if they give any hope of good fruit; in promoting which, I will give thee a proof of my extraordinary love. See Annot. [*m*]

Ver. 13. *The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*] And behold the happy success of such care and diligence! the most excellent fruit is already ripe, and meets us with its refreshing smell; there is nothing so choice and so pleasant, but it grows every where; and is at the very gates; and that in great plenty and variety, both of this year's fruit and of the last: which shall all be reserved for thy uses, and employed for thy honour, O my beloved, from whom it all comes; and for the good and profit of those that belong to thee. See Annot. [*n*]

ANNOTATIONS.

[*a*] Ver. 1. They who earnestly solicited the return of the spouse, in the conclusion of the former chapter, seem now to have a view of her again, and praise her perfections in a new method; beginning at the feet, and so upward (whereas before, chap. iv. her description was from the

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head, and so downward), because they saw her in motion; when she went away, and now at her return to them. Whom they call the *prince's daughter*, alluding, I take it, to Psal. xlv. 13, 14. and conceiving her as that royal bride, whose clothing is there represented as very glorious. And accordingly they admire her very *shoes* or *sandals* (by whose shape the beauty of the feet was discerned), which were wont to be set with *gems*, as we learn from many authors; I shall name none but the book of Judith (because what Greek or Roman writers say about their own shoes is not material), where *sandals* are mentioned as a part of the bravery wherein she set forth herself to deceive Holofernes, (x. 4.) And with these, she is said, in her song, to *have ravished his eyes*, xvi. 9. (See also Isa. iii. 18.)

Now the feet not being here considered as naked, in all reason we ought not to expound the next words of the naked *thighs* (the discovery of which had been immodest), but of the clothing of them round about. For so that word we translate *joints*, is expounded by others the *circuit;* or, as the LXX. *their whole proportion*, or *model:* which was as fine as the ornaments that adorned them. So *chelaim* signifies; which R. Solomon here observes is an Arabic word, denoting not *jewels* (as we translate it), but the *fine attire and trimming*, wherewith women deck themselves to set off their beauty.

Which agrees with what follows, *the work of the hands of a cunning workman*. Where *workman* also signifies, not any artificer, but a *goldsmith*, who (as Bochart hath observed) made wires, laces, wreaths, rings, and such-like little ornaments of gold and silver, as women used.

The Chaldee paraphrase applies all this to the people's going up three times a-year to the public feasts: as R. Solomon beforenamed expounds also that place in Isa. lii. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet*, &c. Which, with more reason, others apply to their return into their own country out of captivity; and the Christian writers apply to the apostles going through the world to preach the gospel, whose steadfastness herein may be also here represented; though I see not why it may not as well be applied to Christians going cheerfully to worship God in their public assemblies.

[*b*] Ver. 2. The garments, I doubt not, of these parts are still described in this verse. For what resemblance hath the *belly* itself of any person (which it had not been seemly neither to describe) unto *a heap of wheat set with lilies?* And they seem to me to have had in their eyes that *apparel of wrought gold*, mentioned Psal. xlv. 13. and represent that part of it which covered the *belly* to be of *raised* or *embossed* work, resembling a *heap of wheat*. By which it is possible may be meant *many sheaves of wheat*, embroidered round about (as the king's daughter's raiment was, ver. 14.) with flowers, especially with *lilies*. And then this was a figure wherein *harvest* was represented; which is no unlikely conjecture: for anciently nothing was more honourable than to follow tillage or pasturage. From whence it is, that we find, in the latter end of Homer's eighteenth Iliad, that the device contrived by Vulcan in Achilles's shield, were reapers, cutting down ripe corn; and the king himself standing in a furrow, and providing a dinner for them.

Now, in the very midst of this work, I conceive there was a *fountain:* which I take to be the meaning of the first words of the verse, *Thy navel is a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor;* that is, *a great bowl or basin was wrought in the centre of the embroidery; full of water, which ran continually from above into it.* Or, *a conduit, running with several sorts of liquors into a great bowl.* Unto which the word *hammazog* (importing a *mixture*) seems to incline the sense.

The word *agan*, which properly signifies κρατῆρα, as the LXX. translate it, a *great bowl*, or *basin;* is used by the Chaldee paraphrast for a receptacle of water, in fountains or in ditches. As in Judg. iv. 11. where the *valley* or plain of *Agannaja*, of bowls, which was in Kedesh, is interpreted, by Kimchi, the *field*, in which were many pits or trenches, like two full bowls of water. This seems to be a plainer interpretation than that of Zanchez; who fancies this to have been some jewel that hung down from her girdle upon the navel; which was of this form, round like the moon. And the Chaldee paraphrast understood it to be of this figure, when he applies it *to the head of their school, who stood in the knowledge of the law, like the circle of the moon; and seventy wise men round about him, like a heap of wheat.*

What is the mystical meaning of this *hieroglyphic vesture* (as it may be called), is very hard to say. It may be applied to the two sacraments, which the church administers to her children: the font in baptism being represented by the former; and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by the other part of this figure.

[*c*] Ver. 3. This verse hath been explained before, iv. 5. I only observe, that the Chaldee paraphrast applies these two breasts to the *two Messiahs*, whom they foolishly expect; the *Son of David*, and the *Son of Ephraim:* who shall be like Moses and Aaron, &c. Which I mention, because it shews that the Jews have an opinion, that the Messiah is discoursed of in this book; and that these words are to be applied to the leaders of the church, such as Moses and Aaron. Of which see in the place beforenamed.

[*d*] Ver. 4. The *tower*, to which the neck is here compared, in all probability is the same with that, iv. 4. where it is called *the tower of David;* and here *the tower of ivory;* because of its smoothness and whiteness. And the phrase is varied, perhaps, to express an increase of beauty: for, ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος we meet withal in Anacreon, in a description of extraordinary handsomeness.

In like manner the eyes are here compared to *pools;* for ὀμμάτων ὑγρότης, *the shining moisture of the eyes*, is commended as very beautiful by many authors: particularly by Plutarch, who commends this in Pompey, and in Alexander; and by Philostratus, in his epistles, very frequently: *Thou seemest to me* (saith he, Epist. γυν. καπηλίδι) *to carry water, as it were, from the fountain of thy eyes,* καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἶναι νυμφῶν μία, *and therefore to be one of the nymphs.*

Among *pools*, those fair ones at Heshbon were much celebrated; which were in the very entrance of the city, hard by the gate called Bath-rabbim; because it opened towards the way that led to Rabbah, the metropolis of the children of Ammon: which made the more people pass in and out at it. For Heshbon, we find in Numb. xxi. 24, 25, &c. was the principal city of Sihon, whose country bordered upon the Ammonites: and it fell to the share of the Gadites, who desired this country, because it abounded with pasturage, and was excellently watered; there being many rivulets and brooks in its neighbourhood, from whence the

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pools of Heshbon were supplied. Which were remarkable for their *purity* and *serenity*, or *quietness;* and therefore fitter to represent the composed, settled eyes of a modest virgin.

Whose gravity and majesty, I suppose, are also set forth in the next words, by comparing her *nose* to the *tower which was in Lebanon;* and appeared at a distance among the trees (especially on that side which looks towards Damascus), as the nose in the face doth among the locks of hair that fall upon the cheeks.

A large, but well-proportioned nose, was always accounted a considerable part of beauty; and an indication, it was generally thought, of greatness of mind and height of spirit. Some add, that it is a token of sagacity and prudence: and the nose being the instrument of smelling, they apply it to the great judgment and foresight of the doctors of the church, who, they think, may be hereby intended. For as the Chaldee paraphrast applies this whole verse to the Sanhedrin, who governed the affairs of that people (who were as full of wisdom, saith he, as a pool is of water), so Christians generally by *eyes* understand the guides and governors of the church. Who may the better be compared to the *pools of Heshbon;* because it was, after the conquest of Canaan, one of the cities of the Levites, (Josh. xxi. 39.) whose office it was to instruct the people. And such being called by the Jews *Rabbim*, and in the singular number *Rabbi*, and *Rabbuni*, some have fancied that they are also denoted in the name *of the gate of Bath-rabbim*. For *Bath (daughter)* signifies people, or inhabitants; who were taught by those great men (as *Rabbim* signifies) what was law and judgment, in the gates of their cities. Damascus also being a great enemy to Israel, and noted for idolatry, they suppose, the nose being turned towards the *watch-tower* looking that way, is an emblem of the care that Christian doctors should take that their people be not seduced to idolatrous worship. We do not read any where in Scripture of this tower: but that it was a *watch-tower*, the word *zophe* here intimates; which we translate *looketh*, but signifies *looking like a watchman*.

[*e*] Ver. 5. It appears from the very phrase, *Thine head upon thee*, that they mean the covering of the head. And this being a description of her utmost perfections, it denotes, I conceive, the crown or garland which she wore (as ready for her nuptials), resembling the top of Carmel. Which was another beautiful mountain in that country, whose head was covered with great variety of flowers and trees. Certain it is, that as it was a rich and fruitful, so a very pleasant and lofty place, (Isa. xxxv. 2. Jer. ii. 7.) and therefore fitly chosen to set forth the dignity and majesty of the spouse.

But there is no necessity, it must be confessed, to interpret this of the mountain Carmel: but the words may be translated, *Thy head is like a pleasant fruitful field*. For so the word *Carmel* (from the goodliness, perhaps, of that mountain) signifies in many places, Isa. xvi. 10. xxxii. 15. Jer. xlviii. 33. where *joy and gladness is* said to be *taken micarmel*, from *Carmel:* which we truly translate *from the plentiful* (or pleasant) *field*. For there the prophet speaks of Moab, in which country Carmel itself was not. And this is an illustration of beauty in other authors: who compare the head of a delicate woman unto a fair meadow, or field. As Philostratus writes to his wife, ἡ δὲ σὴ κεφαλὴ λειμὼν πολὺ; ἄνθη φέρων, &c. *Thy head is a large meadow full of flowers; which are never wanting in the summer, and disappear not in the midst of winter.* And in the same manner Achilles Tatius, lib. i. saith of his Clitophon and Leucippe, ἐπὶ τῶν προσώπων ὁ λειμ῀ν, &c.

The next word *dallath* is never used any where for hair; but should rather be translated the *hair-lace:* that therewith the hair, and all the ornaments belonging to it, were tied up. This *hair-lace* is said here to be of a *purple colour; i. e.* it was rich and noble. For this was the royal colour, and therefore called here the *purple of the king* (as the Vulgar Latin takes it, joining the latter part of the verse with this), *tied up in folds, hanging down like canals;* that is, hanging loose upon the shoulders (as some expound it), it waved up and down: imitating the frizzles and curls of the water in canals. Others refer the two last words of *purple*, lying in canals, to receive a deeper tincture, by being double died.

But the LXX. make the last words a distinct sentence, as we do, in this manner; *The king is tied or bound in his walks.* That is, when he walks in his palace-royal, and beholds her beauty, he stands still, and cannot take his eyes off from her; being captivated with it, and tied as fast to her, as the hair of her head is to the lace that binds it.

The former part of this verse is applied by the Chaldee paraphrast to the *king* (the head of the people), *who shall be just like Elias; who was zealous for the Lord of hosts, and slew the false prophets upon Mount Carmel:* and the latter part of it to the *poor, who shall be clothed by him in purple; as Daniel was in Babylon, and Mordecai in Shushan.*

[*f*] Ver. 6. This verse may be either taken for a commendation of *love*, which had thus adorned her and raised her to this pitch of happiness: or of *her*, who is called *love*, in the abstract: to express more vehemently how lovely she was, and what pleasure they took in beholding her beauty.

The first word *fair* may relate to the rare composition of the whole body: and the next word *pleasant*, or *sweet*, or *comely* (as some translate it), to her graceful motion, gesture, and sweet conversation. And the sense, in short, is this: *O how desirable do the pleasures which thou impartest make thee.*

Theodoret's note here is very pious; that we become thus beautiful and lovely (though deformed before) by delighting in charity; and making doing good, our highest pleasure.

[*g*] Ver. 7. This verse is a reflection upon the whole foregoing description; as appears by the first word *zoth, this:* as if they had said, *to all this thy stature is proportionable.* Which is compared to the *palm-tree;* because it shoots up straight as well as high: and therefore sets forth that part of loveliness, which consists in tallness. Which was always thought a great addition to beauty; and was one reason why women wore ornaments upon the very top of their heads, as well as high shoes, to make them appear the taller. The noblest palm-trees of all other were in Judea (especially about Jericho), as Pliny writes, lib. xiii. cap. 4. From whence it was, that, in future times, it became an emblem of that country: as we find in that medal of the emperor Titus, with a captive woman sitting under a *palm-tree*, and the inscription of *Judea Capta*.

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Our learned countryman, Sir Tho. Brown, (in his Miscellan. Tracts, p. 78.) hath ingeniously observed, that they speak emphatically, when they say they will *go up to take hold of the boughs* of this tree. For it must be ascended, before one can come at the boughs, which it bears only at the top and upper parts. But the trunk, or body of it, is naturally contrived, "densis, gradatisque corticum pollicibus, ut orbibus" (as Pliny there speaks), *with rings in the bark, orderly disposed, like steps,* whereby it may be very easily climbed.

And the *clusters,* to which the breasts are here compared, some think, are nothing but the fruit of this tree, viz. *dates:* for it is not expressed in the Hebrew what *clusters* these were; the word *grapes* being added by our translators of the Bible.

Who supposed, as others do, that vines ran up the palm-tree in those countries: which agrees well with what follows in the next verse, where the *clusters of the vine* are mentioned, as a fit emblem of her breasts. Which were described before, (v. 4.) but now mentioned again; to shew that they looked not merely at the beauty, but the usefulness of that which is meant thereby. And Theodoret makes this pious observation upon it: That *though the church be described as sublime, and reaching up to heaven* (as his words are), *yet she accommodates herself to the weakest and lowest souls: stretching out the breasts of her doctrine to all that need it. For the bunches of the palm-tree* (saith he) *hang down very low.* Which must be understood, not of their hanging down near the earth, but below the bough: which are all at the top, and very high. For which reason Menochius (lib. vii. de Repub. Hebr. cap. 8. n. 10.) thinks it not to be true, which Aben Ezra here notes; that the vines in Palestine were joined unto palm-trees; because the palm-tree hath not boughs fit to support the branches of the vine.

[*h*] Ver. 8. I take this verse to be still the voice of the same persons, though in the singular number (as appears from the mention of the *beloved,* ver. 9. which shews it is not he that speaks here, but some other person), for one spake in the name of the rest; (as Daniel did in the name of his other three brethren, ii. 30. 36.) or the whole *choir* is considered but as one person: who desire to have fellowship and communion with the church in her benefits. Of which having tasted, they say, *Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine;* that is, Now we shall enjoy those delicious pleasures beforementioned, (ver. 6.)

That which we translate *nose,* in the last clause of the verse, the Vulgar translates *countenance* (or *mouth,* rather), agreeable enough to the Hebrew; and most agreeable to the rest of the words. For that which is *smelt,* is the breath, coming out of the mouth: compared to the fragrancy of *citrons, oranges, peaches,* or other sorts of *tappuach;* which is a name (I observed above, ii. 5.) common to all such fruits, as well as those we peculiarly call *apples:* and indeed signifies any fruit that hath a fragrant odour breathing from it.

And this may be thus mystically expounded, *And now shall we delight to hang upon the breasts of the church, and the breath or spirit of the apostles; sweeter than grapes, or the smell of any other fruit.*

[*i*] Ver. 9. Which is farther explained in this verse. Where the *roof of the mouth,* i. e. the words which come from thence, is compared to the most excellent wine: which was so choice, that it was fit only to be presented to him, to whose love they owed all they had (or so delicious, as our translation hath it, that it went down glibly), and so generous, that it put spirits into those who were quite spent with age; nay, raised those who were, in a manner, dead. So this character of the *best wine* runs, word for word, in the Hebrew: *It goeth straight to my beloved, and causeth to speak the lips of old people, or of those that sleep:* that is, are dead. For this word *jeschenim,* our translators thought, may either signify, *old men,* or *men asleep:* though exact grammarians will not allow it; but make a great difference between *jeschenim* and *jeschanim.* The first of which (which is the word here), they say, never signifies old men, but only *sleepers.*

But if we wave this nice distinction, the words may also be thus translated—*which makes men speak with the lips of the ancient;* i. e. sentences, or most excellent sayings. I omit other glosses, which may be found every where.

[*k*] Ver. 10. Here now the spouse, after long silence, puts an end to their *encomium:* modestly acknowledging there was nothing in her that could deserve it; but only as she was his, who could not be praised enough.

The words, in effect, we have met withal twice before, (ii. 16. vi. 3.) For the meaning of the latter part, *his desire is towards me,* is no more than this, (as Mr. Mede hath observed upon Dan. xi. 37.) *He is my husband.* Only there seems to me, to be an allusion here to Psal. xlv. 11. *(the king shall greatly desire thy beauty,* &c.) unto which Solomon, as I take it, hath a respect all along in this poem.

[*l*] Ver. 11. And now she turns herself from them to him (beginning a new part of this Song), and being augmented with those new companions, who had joined themselves unto her, she desires him (without whom nothing could be effected) to go along with her into the fields and villages; that is, to those places, which were not yet become his garden, of which they had been speaking hitherto. Or they were but preparing for it, by the culture he had begun to bestow upon them: which, from the following verse, seems to be the meaning.

Cepharim, villages, are opposed in Scripture to *cities,* (1 Sam. vi. 18.) and signify small towns and hamlets, as we speak, 1 Chron. xxvii. 25. Nehem. vi. 2. And the word *nalinah, let us lodge,* signifies to *tarry,* and to make one's *dwelling* or *abode* in a place; (Psal. xci. 1.) and may be applied to the settling of the gospel in those regions, where it was but newly planted. So Theodoret glosses: *Let us now take care of the meanest and most abject souls, that have lain long neglected; which are tropically called the fields and villages.* Most apply, to the gentile world, in this manner, *We have stayed long enough in the city of Jerusalem, and in Judea; let us go now to the heathen,* &c. I pass by other applications, which may be found in interpreters; and only add this note of my own, That the gospel was first preached in *cities* mostly, and from thence spread itself in time into the neighbouring *villages:* in which idolatry lasted so much longer than in cities, that they gave the name of *paganism* to it.

[*m*] Ver. 12. This verse supposes those fields (ver. 11.) not to have been quite uncultivated; but that there were *vineyards* (that is, *churches,* in the mystical sense) planted in them. And her desire is, that he would accompany her, in visiting them *early;* that is, *very diligently,* as the word

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signifies in many places. Thus in Ecclus. xxxix. 5. it is said of a just man, that he will give his heart *to resort early to the Lord that made him.* Which is suitable to what the Psalmist saith, Psal. v. 1. and Jeremiah, xxi. 12. xxv. 2, 3. Thus Theodoret here expounds it, *It behoveth us to use all fitting diligence, in visiting those that have already received the preaching: whether they bring forth more than leaves; and especially, whether any beginning of charity appear among them.* For so he expounds, *if the pomegranates bud forth.* And this, saith he, is the greatest expression of love to him: which he makes the meaning of the last words, *there will I give thee my loves.* For what care we bestow upon them, he accounts as done to himself: according to his own words, *in as much as you have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.*

The *vines* may signify the lesser sort of people; and the *pomegranates* the greater.

[*n*] Ver. 13. The word *dudaim* is found only here, and in Gen. xxx. 14. where we read, how Jacob's wives contended for them, as a most precious, that is, a rare and delicious fruit. For none can imagine they strove about that now called by us *mandrakes;* which are of a stinking smell, and very offensive; or about any ordinary flower, such as *violets* or *jessamine* (by which some expound this word), which they might have sent out their maids to gather easily every where. Ludolphus, therefore, in his late Ethiopic History, (lib. i. cap. 9. n. 23.) hath happily conjectured that it signifies the fruit which the Arabians call *mauz,* or *muza* (called by some the *Indian fig*), which in the Abyssine country is as big as a *cucumber;* and of the same form and shape, fifty of which grow upon one and the same stalk; and are of a very sweet taste and smell: from which cognation (as he calls it) of a great many upon the same stalk, he thinks it took the name of *judaim.* Which some derive from *dod,* either as it signifies *love,* or a *breast;* with which they fancy this fruit to have had resemblance.

So the sense of this verse is, that they found more there than they expected: or, that by her care the most excellent fruit was produced from people of the best rank (who may be understood by this most rare sort of fruit), and that every where: so that they needed not to be at the trouble to go far to gather it. For at their very gates there were *megadim,* all precious spices, (mentioned before, iv. 13. v. 1.) and those both *new and old* (a phrase for plenty and variety), which, as a faithful steward, she saith, she had laid up for him, with the same care that we do the most precious treasure; so the word *zephantis (I have laid up)* is used, Psal. xvii. 13. cxix. 11.

At the gates] May also signify as much as just ready to be gathered; or to be brought home.

Some apply *new and old* to the knowledge of the Old and New Testament, by which idolatry was vanquished, and true religion planted in the world: and they think our Lord himself alludes to this place, in those words, Matt. xiii. 52. which he speaks of a wise scribe that *bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old.* Others apply *new and old,* unto those virtues that flow only from faith, hope, and charity; and those that are planted in us by nature. But I think, it may most aptly be accommodated to the spiritual gifts, which were newly bestowed upon the church by the Holy Ghost, after our Lord went to heaven; and the temporal blessings, which they enjoyed before: which were now all reserved for him, to be employed in his service. And so these words seem to me to have a respect unto Psal. cx. 3. where it is said, "In the day of his power, they should be a people of free-will-offerings." For when men give up themselves to God sincerely, they readily devote all they have to his uses; when he hath occasion for it. And thus the first Christians at Jerusalem did; who brought all their goods into his treasury: and other nations afterward made plentiful oblations as need required; thereby fulfilling another prophecy, Psal. lxxii. 10. 15. Unto which *megadim* may have respect: for such precious things as silver and gold, as well as the excellent fruits of trees, are called by this name; as may be seen, Deut. xxxiii. 13—16.

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The first four verses belong to the end of the foregoing chapter; wherein the spouse continuing her ardent desire to see his kingdom enlarged, he agrees to it. And then begins (ver. 5.) the ninth and last part of this Song; in which all the persons speak in their turns. Her friends admiring her new advancement; and the spouse declaring the mighty power of love, whereby she had attained it, and hoped to keep it, and was made desirous to propagate it unto those that wanted it, (ver. 6—8.) Which the bridegroom favours; (ver. 9.) and they all promising greater industry in his service, he testifies his acceptance of it, and she her longing to see all this accomplished, (ver. 10, 11, &c.)

Spouse.

Ver. 1. **O** *THAT thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.*] And now, having finished this blessed work, I hope to enjoy more intimate fellowship with thee. I cannot but wish, at least, to be made so happy as to have thy gracious presence always with me: and, by familiar acquaintance and conversation, to be so united with thee, that I may not be ashamed openly to own my love; but look upon it as an honour to make a public profession of my relation to thee. See Annot. [*a*]

Ver. 2. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.*] Whereby I would carry the knowledge of thee from place to place, till I had introduced thee into the acquaintance of my nearest kindred: which would enlarge my knowledge, and make new discoveries to me; and cause no less joy unto thee, and unto all the world, to see them give entertainment to thee. See Annot. [*b*]

Ver. 3. *His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.*] And thanks be to his goodness, I feel him communicating the power of his Spirit to me: which is the greatest token of his love; and then works most strongly in our hearts, when he sees them fullest of love to him. See Annot. [c]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 4. *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye*

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stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.] Who, with his wonted care, or rather with a more earnest concern than ever, repeats his charge to my companions; saying, I conjure you to take heed, lest you discompose, or give the least disturbance to this love: but let it enjoy its satisfaction to the height of its desires. See Annot. [*d*]

Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ver. 5. *(Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple-tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.*] And who can choose but admire at the power of love! which hath advanced her to such a degree of greatness, that it astonisheth those that behold it, and makes them say, Who is this that, out of a low condition, is raised to such familiarity with her beloved, that she leans upon his arm; being made one with him, and enjoying all manner of happiness in his love? Which I have excited towards me, saith she, by the pains I took in thy service, when I laboured in the country plantations; (vii. 11, 12.) such pains as thy mother felt, when she travailed with thee, and brought thee forth out of her womb. See Annot. [*e*]

Spouse.

Ver. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*] Place me, therefore, hereafter so near unto thy heart, that I may never slip out of thy mind; but constantly receive fresh marks and tokens of thy love and favour: deny not this suit, which proceeds from most fervent love; which can no more be resisted than death, and is as inexorable as the grave; especially when it flames to the degree of jealousy, and is afraid of losing what it loves: then it incessantly torments the soul, if it be not satisfied; it wounds incurably; it burns and rages with such a violent and unextinguishable heat, as I feel in my breast, now that it is mightily moved by the Lord. See Annot. [*f*]

Ver. 7. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.*] Though fire may be quenched, yet love cannot; no, not by the greatest difficulties, nay, troubles and sufferings: which, though they come pouring in continually, are so far from being able to suppress it, that they cannot abate it; no, nor translate it to any other, from the person it loves: for, as it is inestimable in itself, so it cannot be purchased by money; nor will they whom it possesses part with it for the greatest estate that they might enjoy without it; but perfectly scorn and reject such proffers. See Annot. [*g*]

Ver. 8. *We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?*] And as for those that want it, or in whom it is but just kindled, it makes us very solicitous what we shall do for them: particularly for one that is as dear to us as a sister; but of a small growth in this most desirable quality; and therefore not capable of that happiness which we enjoy: what shall we do for her, when it shall be said, The time is come that she should be disposed of in marriage; and yet it shall be said withal, that she is not fit for it? See Annot. [*h*]

Ver. 9. *If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.*] We will not despair of her; nor cast her off; but be both patient with her, and do our utmost to make her such as we desire: let her but be faithful and constant, and we will do for her as we do for a wall that is low: which we pull not down, but build up higher, and adorn also with fair and goodly turrets; or as we do with the door of a noble house; which, if it be too weak or too mean, we spare no cost to mend it, but enclose in a case of cedar. See Annot. [*i*]

Little Sister.

Ver. 10. *I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.*] And our labour, I foresee, will not be lost; for I hear her say, I am such a wall; and my breasts rise and grow big like such turrets: I am no longer of a low and despicable stature, nor unmeet for his love; but from this time forth I shall be acceptable unto him, and find such favour with him, as to enjoy all the happiness which he imparts to those that are most dear unto him. See Annot. [*k*]

Ver. 11. *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.*] Which I will endeavour to answer by my best diligence in his service; and from thence still promise myself a greater increase of happiness: for though great persons let out their lands to others, as king Solomon doth the vineyard he hath in Baal-hamon unto several tenants, from every one of which he receives a vast revenue, besides the gain which they have to themselves as a reward of their labour: (ver. 12.) See Annot. [*l*]

Ver. 12. *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.*] Yet I will not commit the vineyard which I am entrusted withal, to the care and management of other persons; but cultivate it myself, with my utmost industry: my own eye shall be ever upon it, and I will let nothing be wanting for its improvement; and therefore, if he receive so much profit, beside the benefit that accrues to others, what fruit may not I expect from a far better soil than his, and from far greater pains and providence that I will use about it? See Annot. [*m*]

Brideyroom.

Ver. 13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.*] Which coming to the ears of her beloved, he said to her in the presence of all that waited on her, Thou hast taken up a worthy resolution; nothing can be more acceptable to me than that thou fix thy habitation in thy vineyard; nor canst thou possibly be better employed, to thy own as well as my content, than about the gardens, (vi. 2.) committed to thy charge: and therefore ask what thou wilt of me, and I tell thee before all thy companions, who are witnesses of what I say, I will do it for thee. See Annot. [*n*]

Spouse.

Ver. 14. *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.*] I have nothing to desire but this, that thou, who art my only beloved, wouldest come and accomplish all these things: make all the speed, that is possible, to come and save us, and perfect thy loving-kindness to us; such speed as the swiftest creatures make to save themselves from danger: let nothing hinder this; but by thy love, which makes all

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things sweet and easy, overcome the greatest difficulties in thy way to us. See Annot. [o]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. This verse, at first sight, looks like a repetition of the same desire wherewith he began this book; that they might be so happy as to see the Messiah appear, though it were but in his infancy; which would transport them with joy, &c. And thus the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it, of the time when the Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel.

But if we consider what follows, it will be more reasonable to connect it with what went before: and to take it for a most ardent expression of love to the person before spoken of, with a desire to have more intimate familiarity with him; such as a sister hath with a brother when he is a sucking child; whom, if she met in the street she would not be ashamed to take out of the nurse's arms into her own, and openly kiss; and not imagine she should thereby incur any reproach or contempt.

This seems to be the most literal sense of the words; which may be applied to the open profession of Christianity, with the greatest confidence and security; nothing being more innocent and harmless than the love and service wherein it engages its disciples to their Lord and Master, Christ. Who the more obedient any person is to God's commands, holds that man or woman the nearer to him; even as dear as a *brother, sister, or mother,* (Matt. xii. 50.) Which (saith Grotius upon that place) is the mystical sense of the Song of songs. (See more in my Preface.)

[b] Ver. 2. This dear Lord (*i. e.* the knowledge of him) she desires here to carry still farther; till she had brought him into the *house,* that is, into the family of her mother. Which may be applied unto the design of God to awaken the Jews to believe on Christ, by bringing in the *fulness,* that is, a vast number, *of the gentiles,* (Rom. xi. 25.) Which the apostle saith there, (ver. 15.) would be *life from the dead:* unto which the last words of this verse may be accommodated.

For after she had said she *would lead him,* or *bring him down;* and then *bring him into the house* of her mother; she adds, *thou shalt teach,* or *instruct me.* Which agrees with what the apostle there writes, (ver. 12.) that if the fall of the Jews was *the riches of the gentiles;* that is, enriched them with the treasures of Divine wisdom and knowledge, how much more would their fulness enrich them? If we refer this clause (as we do) to *mother* beforenamed, the best sense I can make of it is this, *By whom I was educated and instructed.* And then follows her making him *drink of spiced wine* (that is, making a great feast for him, Prov. ix. 2. where the most excellent wine made the chiefest part of the entertainment), such wine as makes those who are asleep to speak, (vii. 9.) Which effect, the receiving of the Jews again will produce; as the apostle tells us, when he saith, *it shall be life from the dead: i. e.* a most powerful argument to enliven the most stupid souls, and move them to believe in Christ.

Certain it is that *herakach, spiced* or *aromatic wine,* denotes its fragrancy or delicious odour; whereby the best wines are discerned, as much as by their taste: and the word we translate *juice* signifies every where *musty,* or *new wine:* whereby the prophets set forth something that works with greater power and efficacy than ordinary, (Zech. ix. 17.) And here, I doubt not, relates to something new and unusual: and, in the mystical application, may signify a greater fulness and power of the Spirit, than had been in former days; working like new wine in the hearts of those that received the gospel.

And this is said to be done to *him,* because, as Theodoret noted before, what is done to his members, he takes as done to himself.

[c] Ver. 3. Who is here represented as immediately condescending to her desires, and fulfilling her wishes: vouchsafing a new supply of the power of the Spirit, to support and comfort her in those labours of love for his name's sake. Which were so great, that she is represented here as spent and fainting away. So she had done before, ii. 6. where see the meaning of these words.

[d] Ver. 4. This verse hath also been twice used before; with no difference from what we read here, but that now the mention of *hinds* and *roes* is left out; and yet he charges them with greater vehemence than ever. For the Hebrew phrase here signifies, as much as *what do you do, why do you stir,* &c. that is, by no means; take heed how you disturb her. (See ii. 7. iii. 5.)

[e] Ver. 5. This seems to be the voice of her companions, or *daughters of Jerusalem,* mentioned in the verse before (and begins the last part of this Song), admiring the new change they saw in her. For she was represented before as *coming out of the wilderness,* (iii. 6.) but not *leaning upon her beloved;* as she is here. Which signifies her advancement unto a state of greater dearness to him, and familiarity with him.

The word *mithrappeketh* is not found elsewhere, and therefore variously translated by interpreters. But most agree that it signifies, either closely *adhering,* or *leaning, relying,* and *recumbing,* as they speak: which L. de Dieu hath shewn is the use of the word in the neighbouring languages. But there are those who think it imports something of pleasure (and therefore the Vulgar takes in that sense with the other, as I have in the Paraphrase), and translate it, *flowing with the delights.* For she having been in the fields and villages, visiting the vineyards, and other places, (vii. 11—13.) is now introduced as coming back from thence, into the royal city. Which being seated on high, in comparison with the plains out of which she came, she is said to *ascend,* or *come up:* but, that she might not be tired with the journey, is represented as *leaning upon the arm of her beloved* (or, as some will have it, *lying in his bosom,* as St. John did in our Saviour's), and laden with the delicious fruit beforementioned, (vii. 13.) Which excited the admiration of all that knew her, when they beheld the grace of her Lord towards her; together with her own beauty, riches, ornaments, and happiness.

The latter part of the verse, all the Greek fathers take to be the bridegroom; and so do many of the Latins. But some of them, and all the Hebrew writers, take them to be the words of the spouse; because *thee* is of the masculine gender. Whichsoever way we take them, the sense is very hard to find. If we go the first way, the most natural sense seems to be, that he puts her in mind of the poor and mean condition, out of which he had taken her; into a state of the greatest friendship with him: that she might not be

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vainly puffed up, with the acclamations which were made to her.

But I have followed the Hebrew points in my Paraphrase, and understood the words of *stirring up his love towards her,* when they were looking after the plantations mentioned vii. 11, 12. Which was excited by the care and pains she took in that business; like the pains of a woman in travail: unto which St. Paul compares the solicitude and care he had about the Galatians, that *Christ might be formed in them,* (iv. 19.)

Certain it is that *chibbelah* is a word which relates to the pangs of travailing women, and therefore the LXX. translate it ὠδίνησε: so that if I have not conjectured amiss about the rest, my interpretation of the last words is natural enough. For *caph similitudinis* (as they call it) is frequently omitted in the Scripture, and to be supplied in the sense. Twice in this very book it is wanting, i. 15. vii. 4. *thy eyes are doves'*, that is, as doves'. And in Prov. xvii. 21. and in his father David's Psalms, very often, Psal. xi. 1. *How say you to my soul, Flee a bird (i. e.* as a bird) *to your hill?* And to omit other places, cxix. 119. *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth dross;* i. e. *as* or *like* dross.

In like manner I take the last words of this verse, *there (viz.* I stirred thee up) *as thy mother travailed in birth with thee,* there, *I say, like her that brought thee forth: i. e.* by such pains as these I raised up thy love to me.

As for what is said by many interpreters, concerning Eve's eating the apple in Paradise, and thereby ruining all mankind; there is no reason to think, either that she is the *mother* here meant, or that *tappuach* denotes an *apple,* rather than *orange, citron,* or such-like fruit.

[*f*] Ver. 6. The words, also, according to the Hebrew points, are the words of the spouse; beseeching her beloved to keep her always in his mind, as one very dear to him. For that was the end of having the name, or the picture, of a beloved person, engraven on a *seal,* or *jewel,* and wearing it next the heart, or upon the arm; that it might testify their great esteem of such persons, and the constancy of their affection towards them, and that they desired they might never slip out of their memory. (See Jer. xxii. 24.)

Some think here is an allusion to the high-priest; who carried the names of the children of Israel engraven in precious stones, not only upon his breast, but upon his shoulders also; as may be seen, Exod. xxviii. 11, 12. 21. and this, *for a memorial before the Lord continually,* ver. 29. (Which interpretation may be confirmed by the words of the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xlv. 11. who saith, *Aaron was adorned with precious stones, graven like seals.)* And they think withal, that *seal upon the heart* relates to the inward affection; and *seal on the arm,* to the outward expressions of love and esteem.

And then follows the reason of this prayer; which proceeded from the vehemence of her love, which was grown to the height of jealousy (which is nothing but the highest degree of love), lest she should lose him, as she had been in danger before, (v. 6, &c.)

This love is said to be *as strong as death:* which is admirably expressed by Maximus Tyrius, dissert. 10. *Wild beasts are not terrible to it, nor fire, nor precipices, nor the sea, nor the sword, nor the halter,* ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἄπορα αὐτῷ εὐπορώτατα, &c. *but even the most unpassable difficulties are got over by it; the hardest things are presently mastered; the most frightful easily surmounted,* &c. it is every where *confident, overlooks all things, overpowers all things,* &c. But none express this like St. Paul, Rom. viii. 35—37, &c.

There is no difficulty but in the last clause of the verse (for as *strong as death,* signifies to be insuperable; so *cruel as the grave,* denotes it not to be moved by prayers and entreaties, or any thing else): where the word *reschapcha* should not be translated *the coals thereof,* but the *arrows thereof are arrows of fire.* That is, it shoots into the heart, wounds it, and burns there; nay, inflames it vehemently by the wounds it gives: as the reverend and learned Dr. Hammond hath observed upon Psal. lxxvi. 3. And so the LXX. seem here to understand it, when they translate it περίπτερα αὐτῆς, *its feathers, or wings, wherewith it flies,* are *wings of fire.* Which wings or arrows of fire, are said, in the last words of all, to be a *most vehement flame;* or rather it should be thus translated, *which are the flames of the fire of the Lord.* So the Hebrew word seems to signify, being compounded of three words, *fire, flame,* and *the Lord:* denoting mighty and exceeding scorching flames. Such compositions are not only to be found in other parts of the Bible, (Jer. ii. 31.) but in the Punic language also, as Bochartus shews in his Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 15.

Some translate it, *Such flames are kindled only by the Lord.* And then, if there be an allusion to the breast-plate of the high-priest, in the beginning of the verse, I fancy the conclusion may allude to the *fire, that went out from before the Lord,* (Lev. ix. 24.) and devoured the sacrifices, as love doth all manner of difficulties. This fire was to burn perpetually upon the altar, and never be suffered to go out, (Lev. vi. 12.) and therefore the best emblem of love that could be found.

[*g*] Ver. 7. For it is unextinguishable, as it here follows, *Many waters cannot quench love.* Which is a metaphor whereby profane authors also have set forth the mighty, unconquerable power of love. —— τίς ὁ καινὸς ἐμπρησμὸς, &c. *What new kind of conflagration is this?* (saith Philostratus in one of his epistles) *I am ready to call for water, and there is none to bring it,* ὅτι τὸ σβεστήριον εἰς ταύτην τὴν φλόγα ἀπορώτατον, *for a quencher of this fire is the most impossible to be found. If one bring it from the fountain, or if he take it out of the river, it is all one; for the water itself is burnt up by love.*

By *many waters* are sometimes meant, in Scripture, *many afflictions* (as is very well known), which they that love, frequently endure, before they can accomplish their desire. But though there should be an *inundation* of them, we are here told they cannot *overwhelm,* or *overflow* it; as the word we translate *drowned* signifies: but it will still live and be uppermost, and prevail.

And such is its constancy, and satisfaction also, which it hath in its own pleasures, it regards not riches at all; but will rather be poor with one whom it affects, than enjoy great possessions with another person. Nay, it despises, and that with disdain, the offers of a man's whole estate; if that condition be imposed, of forsaking its love. Others may laugh, perhaps, at such persons; but, it is all one, they smile at them again. So Theodoret and the LXX. understand the latter part of this verse, *if a man give away all his substance in charity, they will extremely despise him.* That is, saith he, they that spend all they have, and their

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very lives, for the love of God, are set at nought by those that want such love. Other interpretations of these words I have expressed in the Paraphrase.

[*h*] Ver. 8. Here is another property of Divine love, which makes us solicitous for those that want it; or have but the beginnings of it, and may be in danger to lose them. And this seems to be the speech of the spouse to her companions, who were all troubled for a *sister* (that is, some church), which was of a small growth, and had *no breasts;* that is, was not ripe for marriage. For all have breasts; but they do not rise and swell, till they are of such an age that they may be called *women,* (Ezek. xvi. 7.) They inquire there what they should do for her, *in the day when she shall be spoken for?* that is, demanded in marriage. Or, *when there shall be speech concerning her;* that is, concerning this defect of hers.

[*i*] Ver. 9. Here he returns an answer to that question: which is, that he and they will take the greater care for her; to raise her stature, and to bring her to perfection. For where there are good beginnings, we are not wont to forsake them: but rather to add to them and improve them. As, for example, the wall of a building which we esteem, we do not suffer to fall to the ground, but strengthen and raise it: nay, adorn it sometimes, and beautify it with towers and pinnacles; which we stick not to gild, that they may appear more gloriously. Or, if it be a door of a house, which we value, we let it not decay; but rather case it with boards of *cedar,* to make it more durable, as well as neat and handsome: for *cedar* is not apt to putrefy.

This seems to me the most simple exposition of these words; and I do not think fit to trouble the reader with that vast variety, which may be found in interpreters. But only add, that they may very naturally be applied unto a soul, or a church in a state of imperfection; but built upon Christ the foundation: in this manner, *Let her but be firm and constant, like a wall, in her love to me, and I will not abandon the care of her; let her but exclude all other, and open to me alone, and she shall never want any thing necessary to her perfection: for I will richly adorn her, and make her like the house of God himself; which is lined with cedar.*

[*k*] Ver. 10. And then this verse may be thus applied (being her answer): *I am resolved to do what thou requirest (to be steadfast and faithful), and already perceive the reward of my fidelity,* &c. For these words plainly relate to the foregoing, as I have expressed in the Paraphrase: unto which I shall add nothing; for if that be admitted, there is no difficulty in them. It being known to every body, that *shalom, peace,* signifies all manner of happiness in the Hebrew language: which is included also in our English word *favour,* whereby we here translate it. For it signifies all the good things, that may be expected from the favour he bears to any person.

[*l*] Ver. 11. And being thus *favoured* by him, she now promises her diligence (in this and the next verse) to do him the best service, and to make the greatest improvements she could, of the talents committed to her. For though Solomon (she here saith) let out his vineyard, which he had in Baal-hamon, a place near Jerusalem, as Aben Ezra tells us (which is followed by most interpreters, few thinking it to be near En-gedi), where abundance of people had vineyards, and he a very large one: for it being let to several farmers, every one paid him a *thousand pieces of silver, i. e.* shekels (as much as to say, it brought him in a vast revenue yearly; for a *thousand* is a sum of perfection, Psal. cxliv. 13. Micah v. 2. and other places, and the number of farmers or tenants, though not expressed, some think, to be *ten*); yet she takes up another resolution, which she expresses in the next verse.

[*m*] Ver. 12. Where she saith she will herself look after the vineyard committed to her trust, and not leave it to the care of others. Which seems to be the meaning of the first phrase in this verse: *My vineyard which I have is before me; i. e.* under my eye (as we speak) and special care. Thus God's judgments are said to be before David; (Psal. xviii. 22.) that is, he took great care never to swerve from them.

It amounts also to the same sense, if we take this phrase to signify as much as, *it is in my power,* (Gen. xlvii. 5. Jer. xl. 4.) For then the meaning is, she kept it in her own hand, or occupation, and did not farm it out to others.

And then the last part of the verse signifies, that if Solomon made such a profit of his vineyard as that beforenamed (besides *two hundred* shekels, which each of the farmers got over and above for their pains), though he did not dress it himself, what would be the increase that she was likely to make by her own care and diligence in the business? That is, it was incredible what fruit she would reap by her pains: according to that of the son of Sirach, (Ecclus. xxiv. 31, &c.) *I said I will water my best garden, and I will water abundantly my garden-bed; and lo, my brook became a river, and my river became sea,* &c.

This seems to me the most natural sense of these two difficult verses, which Almonazir suggested to my thoughts. And that Solomon, not any other person, is here intended, Maimonides himself agrees; who, in his treatise of the Foundation of the Law, chap. 7. hath these words: *Wheresoever you meet with the name of Solomon, in the book of Canticles, it is holy; as the rest of the names there are: save only in that place, A thousand are to thee, O Solomon,* &c. Others also add that place, (Cant. iii. 7.) *Behold his bed, which is Solomon's,* &c. Where the masters say, it is a common name, as well as here.

These two verses are ingeniously applied by some, to the far greater increase of knowledge and goodness in the *church* than in the *synagogue:* that is, by Christianity than by Judaism.

[*n*] Ver. 13. This verse, according to the Hebrew points, is the voice of the *bridegroom:* who seems to commend the resolution she made, in the foregoing verse. And he calling her *the inhabitant of the gardens* (which are the same with the *vineyard* beforementioned), it signifies her perpetual care about their prosperity. In recompence of which, he bids her, before they finish this interview, to ask what she will of him, and it shall be done for her. Which, in short, is the sum of what the same Almonazir hath long ago conjectured to be the sense of this place.

[*o*] Ver. 14. Unto which she returns her answer in these words, and so shuts up this Song. Which seems to me to conclude as it began; with a desire that the Messiah would come, and make good all those things that had been represented in these raptures.

The word *berach,* which we translate *make haste,* is twice translated by the LXX. διαντέομαι, to *go,* or *run through,* to the very end. (Exod. xxvi. 28. xxxvi. 33.) And, no

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doubt, denotes here most vehement and restless endeavours in a speedy course: like that of a *roe, buck,* or *wild goat,* rather; whose agility, both in running and jumping, is celebrated by all authors, and said to be such as is scarce credible.

The *young hart* (called here *opher*) is still more swift and nimble than the old; the exceeding great fear wherein it is adding wings (as we speak) to its feet. Whence Xenophon saith, there is nothing comparable to their swiftness when the old ones are absent, and they are pursued by dogs: τότε τάχος οὐδὲν εἰκὸς, &c. *then there is no speed like* to that of such young harts, as his words are quoted by Bochartus.

Who well observes, (lib. iii. cap. 17. par. i. de Animal.) that the sense of the last words *(upon the mountains,* &c.) is to be made out by adding one word, in this manner: *Be thou like the young harts running (*or *when they run) upon the mountains of spices; i. e.* the mountains where spices grow; such as those mentioned iv. 6. Such, perhaps, was Bether, (ii. 17. where we meet with these words before), and I have sometimes thought, that they should be so translated here, *the mountains of Besamin;* as there *the mountains of Bether.*

But what these mountains were we are now ignorant, though this is certain, that the creatures here mentioned were bred in the highest mountains of the country; as Ælian testifies in the latter end of his fifth book: "The harts in Syria are bred in their highest mountains, Amanus, Libanus, and Carmel." For there they were safest and most secure from danger; there it was difficult to pursue them, especially when they climbed up the steepest places. And therefore the Psalmist and the prophet Habakkuk, when they would represent themselves as in a state of perfect security, say, God had *made their feet like hinds' feet, and made them to walk upon their (bamoth) high places,* (Psal. xviii. 33. Hab. iii. *ult.)* Which words allude to the inaccessible mountains, which those creatures frequented; especially the females, that they might there secure their young ones. Besides, as there they could feed and bring forth their young most securely; so there was the sweetest feeding.

In short, Solomon here seems to long for the first coming of the Messiah, as St. John doth for his last: who concludes his book of the Revelation in the same manner as Solomon doth this: saying, *Come, Lord Jesus,* (Rev. xxii. 20.)

There are those who fancy, that in the foregoing verse the bridegroom asks her consent, for the perfecting their love in marriage; and desires her, in the audience of her companions, to lift up her voice, and sing the nuptial hymn: which she now, say they, in this verse, professes herself to be ready to do, if he would but be present with her, and assist and direct her to do it aright. And then it is thus applied and paraphrased by the forenamed Almonazir:—

Thou commandest me that I should with morning and evening hymns and songs celebrate thy omnipotent wisdom and goodness, &c. *vouchsafe then speedily to adjoin the eternal force and flame of thy Holy Spirit unto my voice; that, in spirit, and truth, and sanctity of heart, I may sing thy praises: and, not only with my mouth and sound, but in my mind and heart especially, worthily worship thy incomprehensible majesty.*

Whence it is, that the church, being moved by a Divine inspiration, saith thus in all her prayers:

"O Lord, open thou our lips:
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us."

Amen.

END OF BISHOP PATRICK'S COMMENTARY, &c.

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A

COMMENTARY

UPON THE

LARGER AND LESSER PROPHETS:

BEING

A CONTINUATION OF BISHOP PATRICK.

By WILLIAM LOWTH, B. D.

PREBENDARY OF WINCHESTER.

"THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY."—REV. XIX. 10.

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A

COMMENTARY

UPON THE

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

AND

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

JONATHAN,

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, AND PRELATE OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER.

My Lord,

THE chief design of the following work, which I humbly offer to your Lordship, is to assert the ancient and catholic sense of several texts of the Prophet, whom I undertake to explain, and vindicate them from some novel expositions, which tend to deprive the Christian religion of the benefit of so considerable a testimony: and I humbly beg leave to present to your Lordship this small acknowledgment of my duty and observance, as a member of your cathedral, and minister of a parish-church of your diocess and patronage, and to which your Lordship hath been pleased to be a benefactor, when it lately suffered under a great calamity.

How mean soever the performance may be, I hope the design of it may in some measure recommend it to your Lordship's patronage, which is to illustrate this *evangelical Prophet*, who, by the general consent of former ages, hath been placed at the head of that noble order: a person, whose supernatural gift of prophecy added a new lustre to the greatness of his birth, and whose liberal education furnished him with a noble eloquence, and suitable to the dignity of his argument.

The same Holy Spirit, who sometimes spake to the world by *shepherds* and *fishermen, that the excellency* of the truths delivered by them *might appear to be of God, and not of themselves,* at other times made choice of the pen of a David, a Solomon, and an Isaiah, to instruct us that the outward accomplishments of birth and fortune may be sanctified to higher purposes, and made instrumental in advancing the glory of God, and the interests of religion.

That your Lordship may continue to employ the advantages of your great station and quality to God's honour, and the service of his church, is the hearty prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most dutiful and obedient servant,

WILLIAM LOWTH.

PREFACE.

THERE is no part of the Holy Scriptures that more deserves the thoughts of inquisitive men, than the writings of the prophets. God, in his word, hath offered suitable matter for the several capacities of men. The historical books instruct us in the methods of providence, and afford an agreeable entertainment to inquisitive minds, as they contain the most ancient records that are in the world, and relate the most remarkable occurrences that ever happened in it. Persons of ordinary understandings, may find all necessary truths plainly delivered, and often repeated, in the New Testament writings, and in the *practical* books of the Old: those of higher endowments, may find sufficient employment in unfolding the types and figures of the *Jewish economy,* and in searching into the depths of the *prophetical* predictions. We may, indeed, find some prophecies plainly delivered with great exactness of time, and particularity in circumstances (those especially which relate to the coming of the Messias), that, when the events came to pass, they might appear to be the effects of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge. But the far greater part of the prophetical predictions are couched in *symbols* and sacred *hieroglyphics* (a way of conveying the abstruser parts of knowledge, much used in the eastern countries): as it were on purpose to excite the curiosity of the ingenious, and reward the diligence of the industrious searchers after Divine truth. To which, we may add, that the *metaphorical* style of the prophets, is very proper to inspire the minds of attentive readers, with noble ideas of God's wisdom and providence, and to affect us, with the most lively image of the glorious kingdom of God and Christ, the happiness of those that shall have a share in the tri-

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umphs of it, and the terribleness of those punishments which are denounced against such as will not have him to reign over them. And to encourage men in the searches of this kind, they will find such a harmony and correspondence between the figures and emblems, whereby the prophets point out things to come, that the careful comparing of them with each other, will afford the best clue to guide the attentive reader through the most difficult parts of their writings, and is likewise a surprising proof that they all wrote by the direction of one and the self-same *Spirit*.

This hath been in some measure attempted in the ensuing work, where the author hath used his utmost diligence, to compare the text with such parallel places, both of the Old and New Testament, which might any way conduce to the clearing up its sense: and he is willing to believe, that if he hath given any new light to the obscure and difficult passages of this Prophet, it is chiefly by comparing the phrase and idiom of the text with other parallel places more exactly than hath been hitherto done by any commentator upon this Prophet, that he hath seen: and he desires the reader, that when he finds a more than ordinary difficulty, he would carefully consider the parallel texts there referred to, which, to have set down at length, would have enlarged this work beyond its due bounds.

The writings of the prophets unfold the methods of Providence in many remarkable instances: such as are God's disposal of kingdoms and governments, and making use of wicked princes and nations to be the instruments of his justice in punishing others as bad or worse: the gradual discovery of the coming of the Messias, and the several steps and advancements, by which God introduced his kingdom into the world, and will still carry it on till the consummation of all things. These speculations must needs afford great entertainment to men of curious and inquisitive tempers, and be matter of delight as well as instruction.

These reasons, as they should encourage those to the study of the prophetical writings, who have any talents for such an employment, especially those whose profession engages them to *search the Scriptures:* so they should recommend any attempt that is made towards the farther explaining of so considerable a part of the Holy Scriptures. For after all the pains that hath been taken in clearing up the sense of these sacred books, by persons excellently qualified for such an undertaking, still there is room left for farther endeavours in that kind. For there is a treasure of heavenly wisdom contained in them, that can never be exhausted: and as it is highly reasonable to believe, that some parts of the Old Testament prophecies reach to the end of the world; so it is as reasonable to expect, that, in every age, Providence should open some new scene, which will give farther insight into the meaning of those sacred writings.

I confess, I can by no means approve of the opinion of some learned men, who are for cramping the sense of the prophets, and confining it within as narrow a compass as they can, and will needs maintain that the prophets scarce foresaw any thing but what was to come to pass in or near their own time. I must own myself puzzled, to assign a reason why God should appoint a succession of prophets to foretell what should come to pass within the compass of about three hundred years (for within that time most of those prophets lived, whose writings make up that part of the Scripture canon, which is called by that name), and take no notice of any other occurrences which should happen in succeeding times; whereas to extend the prophetic views to the end of the world, seems much more agreeable to that description of God's prescience which the holy writers give us, that "He declares the end from the beginning," (Isa. xlvi. 10.) and "His wisdom reaches from one end [*of the world*] to the other mightily, and sweetly does it order all things." (Wisd. viii. 1.) So that even when the whole *mystery of God's dispensations shall be finished*, it will appear that nothing is contained in them, but what God hath formerly "declared to his servants the prophets," as it is expressly affirmed, Rev. x. 7.

For a farther proof of this assertion, I desire it may be considered, that the prophecies, which foretell the visibility and universality of Christ's church, accompanied with perfect peace, prosperity, and holiness, cannot, with any probability, be said to have as yet received their accomplishment, as neither have those predictions which foretell the flourishing state of the Jewish church and nation in the latter times. And to suppose these prophecies to have already received their utmost completion, is, in my judgment, to give too great an advantage to the Jews, and in effect to acknowledge that they never were, nor will be, fulfilled in their natural and obvious sense. Whereas, on the other side, to assert that many prophecies relating to the Messias are already fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, a truth that can be made out beyond all contradiction; and withal to maintain that several others concerning the same subject, relate to his *second coming*, and their accomplishment shall usher in or accompany that his glorious appearance: I say, the observing this distinction between the different times, wherein the several prophecies relating to the coming of Christ shall be fulfilled, effectually answers all the arguments which the Jews make use of to support themselves in their incredulity; it discovers a perfect harmony and correspondence between the prophecies of the Old and New Testament, and it gives us an agreeable view of a more flourishing state of the church, than the world hath yet been blessed with; and thereby engages us to use our best endeavours to restore the church to its primitive purity, wherever we find it defective.

These considerations at first engaged me to attempt a Commentary upon the Prophet Isaiah; who, as he is the first and principal of the prophets in order; so he hath had the honour of being styled the *evangelical Prophet* by the Christian church, because he foretold the coming and kingdom of the Messias with greater clearness than any of the rest. But he will have but little pretence to that title, if we follow some men's notions, which have been lately renewed, and zealously maintained, by Mr. Samuel White, in his Commentary upon this Prophet; where he all along supposes, that the far greatest part of this prophecy, relates only to the times in which the Prophet lived, and those that succeeded till the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. Indeed, he is willing to allow the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to have been fulfilled only in our Saviour: but according to his hypothesis, that prophecy must come in very abruptly, without any connexion upon what went before, or what follows. To do him all the justice I can, I must own, that, in his preface, he asserts a double meaning of many prophecies: one more immediately relating to the present circumstances of things in or near

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the Prophet's own time; the others having more distant views upon the state of the gospel-times. But his general design in his arguments to the chapters, and in his notes, whenever an occasion is offered, is to run down and ridicule the *spiritual* and *mystical* sense of particular texts or prophecies, and to accuse the commentators who have asserted it, as *making a nose of wax* of the Scriptures, and forcing the words to an unnatural and improper signification. (See his argument on chap. lxvi. as also on xi. xxxv. lv. lx. lxii. and his notes upon xxx. 25. xli. 2. xlix. 9. lx. 7.) Now these assertions are a direct contradiction to the manner of interpreting the Old Testament prophecies, made use of by Christ and his apostles in the New; where we find our Saviour applies several of the ancient prophecies to himself; and the apostles frequently assert, that *all things happened to the Jews in figures*, that their ordinances were *parables* (Παραβολὴ, Heb. ix. 11.) or allegories with respect to the times of the gospel; that the Christian church is the true *Israel of God*, and all the privileges appropriated to the Jewish nation in the Old Testament as God's *segullah*, or *peculiar people*, do in a more eminent manner appertain to the church of Christ, which is that true kingdom of God, the *Jerusalem coming down from heaven*, of which the earthly Jerusalem, and the temple there, was only a type and figure.

These rules for interpreting the ancient prophecies laid down by the apostles, ought to be a standard for all Christians to square their interpretations by, as being delivered by those who had the Γνῶσις, or that especial *gift of the Spirit*, which enabled them to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, and apply them to the times of the New. This is that *public* or authentic *interpretation* of the Scripture prophecies, which St. Peter opposes to a *private interpretation*, 2 Pet. i. 20. (Ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως. The word Ἐπίλυσις properly signifies *interpretation*, being derived from Ἐπιλύω, which signifies to *expound*, Mark iv. 34. So Gen. xli. 12. "To each man according to his dream he did interpret." It is in the Greek, Ἀνδρὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐνύπνιον αὐτῷ ἐπέλυσε); that is, to such an interpretation as is wholly owing to human wit or invention, or relates to private persons and transactions. Whereas, this public interpretation is taken from the *common analogy of faith*, (Rom. xii. 6.) and arises from *comparing spiritual things with spiritual;* (1 Cor. ii. 13.) *i. e.* the spiritual sense of the Old Testament writings with that of the New, and with one another. In which particular, I cannot but look upon Mr. White's exposition as very deficient, in that he scarce ever compares the phraseology of Isaiah with that of the other prophets, or with parallel texts of the New Testament; which one would think every Christian commentator should have a particular regard to, in explaining the sense of the ancient prophecies.

The ancient Jews never contested this point with the Christians, but always acknowledged that the chief design of the prophets was to foretell the times of the Messias. And when Christ and his apostles explained the prophecies in a *spiritual* or *mystical* sense, they interpreted them according to the received notions of the synagogue, and are never taxed, that we can find, for misapplying the particular texts they alleged, as if they did not belong to the times of the Messias. The words of St. Peter do in some measure inform us, from whence the Jews might receive these notions, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. where he tells us, That the prophets who "searched diligently what, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow, had it revealed unto them, that not unto themselves, but to us they did minister the things" which the apostles preached. No doubt, but they studied their own prophecies, and the Spirit of God so far assisted them; and enlightened their minds, as to enable them to leave this key for the interpreting their own writings, and letting succeeding ages into the true meaning of them. And thus a traditionary explication of the Old Testament prophecies, was carried down from the very time of the prophets to after-ages.

Several arguments may be alleged to prove, that these notions were generally received among the Jews long *before* Christ's time: in the first place, we may argue from their admitting the Song of Solomon into their canon, which could have no pretence for being placed among the sacred writings, but only as it was supposed figuratively to set forth the *spiritual marriage of Christ and his church*. The same point may farther be proved from their ancient Targums and Paraphrases upon the Scripture, from the Mischna, and those *mystical* expositions of several texts, which we read in the epistle of Barnabas, and which it is probable were taken out of some Midrasch, or authentic exposition of the Scripture texts, as hath been observed by Bishop Fell, and other learned commentators upon that epistle. And though it should be granted, that some of those writings are not so old as the time of Christ and his apostles; yet this doth not invalidate the force of the argument, because those writings consist of traditionary explications of Scripture, which the compilers took from the writings of former ages, just as, in aftertimes, the Greek Catenæ upon the Scriptures were compiled out of the writings of the ancient fathers by authors of a later day.

It does not appear, that this mystical way of applying the Scripture prophecies to the times of the Messias, was ever called in question, till the Jews came to engage in disputes with the Christians; and then, to avoid the force of their arguments, they found it necessary to reject the opinions of their ancestors. It was this consideration made Aquila and Theodotion, apostates from Christianity to Judaism, to undertake a new translation of the Old Testament into Greek, because they thought the interpretation of the Septuagint too favourable to the Christians, having been framed according to the traditionary explication of the sense of the prophets, which had been received among the Jews time out of mind. (See Bishop Pearson's notes upon his Exposition of the second, third, and fourth Articles of the Creed: and Justin Martyr's Dialogue against Trypho the Jew.)

This Christian interpretation about the prophecies is called the *mystical sense*, because it helps to unfold the mysteries of the gospel, not as if it were always opposed to a literal sense. For in many cases what we call the *mystical sense*, more exactly answers the natural and genuine import of the words, than any other interpretation that can be given of them. To instance in that famous prophecy, (Isa. vii. 14.) "Behold, a virgin shall conceive," &c. Supposing, but not granting, that this prophecy can be applied in a lower sense to Isaiah's son, or any other person but Christ; yet

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it is plain, at first sight, that the historical sense, which is commonly given of the words, to denote *one that is now a virgin, but should afterward marry and bear a son*, comes infinitely short of the true force and meaning of them, and contains nothing in it that can deserve to be called a *sign* or *wonder*. This seems to have been a maxim in interpreting prophecies, received among the Jews before Christ's time, that wherever they observed an imperfect completion of a prophecy in the historical event, which no way answered the lofty expressions, and extensive promises, which the natural sense of the text imported, there they supposed the times of the Messias to be ultimately intended, "in whom all the promises of God are yea, and amen." (Scriptores Θεόπνευστοι de Typo disserentes, divinius quiddam ex inopinato pati solent, et ad Antitypum vehementiori Spiritus afflatu rapi et elevari." Spencer de Legib. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 8. n. 2.)

To prevent any misunderstanding, it may be proper likewise to take notice, that this *mystical sense* of the prophecies, is now and then, but not so fitly, called a *secondary sense;* not as if it were less principally intended by the prophets, but rather with respect to the time, because it is the last or ultimate completion of their predictions.

That many of the prophecies are not limited to one single event, but may have different views, and be capable of being fulfilled by several steps and degrees, is what I have all along supposed in the following Commentary, and therefore here it will be proper to assign the reasons of such a supposition. This subject hath been handled by several learned men, and of late by Dr. Nich. Clagett. [My Lord Bacon has made an observation upon this subject, which deserves to be taken notice of; in his Advancement of Learning, book ii. chap. 11. "In the interpretation of prophecies, that latitude must be allowed, which is proper and familiar to Divine prophecies, that their accomplishments may be both perpetual and punctual. For they resemble the nature of their Author, *To whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. And though the fulness and height of their complement be many times assigned to some certain age or point of time, yet they have nevertheless certain stairs or scales of accomplishment throughout divers ages of the world."] I shall not repeat what hath been said already upon this argument, but only lay down some general reasons of this assertion.

I have already observed, that this opinion is agreeable to the sentiments of the Jews: the only point in which they differ from us is, whether the Messias, to whom the prophecies relate, be already come, or be yet to come. Therefore I shall not any longer insist upon that argument, but proceed to observe, that under the Old Testament, all the most considerable persons and transactions there mentioned were *typical*, and prefigured the state of things under the Messias. Thus the New Testament informs us, that by Sarah and Hagar were allegorically represented the *two covenants:* by the preferring of Jacob before Esau, the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the gentiles: by the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, the redemption of mankind by Christ, the *true passover sacrificed for us:* that the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, did typify the sacrament of baptism; and their sojourning in the wilderness, in their way to the promised land, was designed to signify that we are but *strangers and pilgrims in* this world, and must look upon heaven as the only true place of *rest which remains for the people of God*. In the characters the Scriptures give us of Adam and Melchisedec, of Isaac and Joseph, of Moses and Joshua, of David and Solomon, of Eliakim and Jonah, of Cyrus and Zerubbabel, they plainly describe them as figures of Christ: that several circumstances of their lives did foreshew the most remarkable passages of his, and the deliverances some of them wrought for God's people, were earnests of a greater redemption to be accomplished by the Messias. Several of the Psalms, particularly the eighteenth and the hundred and eighteenth, were writ upon particular occasions, relating to some remarkable circumstances of David's life, as appears both by their *titles* (which, to be sure, are as ancient as the compiling the Old Testament *canon*), and by the general subject handled in them: and yet several passages out of these Psalms are applied in the New Testament to Christ and the gospel, as more eminently fulfilled in them. From these principles we may conclude, that there is a resemblance, or *correspondence*, between many of the transactions mentioned in the Old Testament, and those which should come to pass under the New: and consequently, that the prophets, when they spake of some events near their own times, probably had more distant views, which might reach even to the latter ages of the world.

This assertion, as it shews that *fulness of sense* contained in the Scriptures, which Tertullian saith, (advers. Hermog. cap. 22.) *he did so much reverence and adore*, ("adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem,") so it introduces Christ into the world, with a great deal of pomp and solemnity; whilst it makes the whole contrivance of the Jewish dispensation, and all the eminent persons of former times, as so many harbingers to prepare the way for his coming, and thereby raises in our minds a just veneration for the gospel-state, as the masterpiece of Divine Providence, that point wherein all the lines of God's *manifold wisdom* do meet as in their centre; from whence it is evidently demonstrated, that "Christ was ordained by God, before the foundation of the world," though in his wise disposal he did not appear till the latter times of it. These *providential congruities* between the times of the Old and New Testament, do very much confirm the authority of both Testaments; for they plainly shew, that they were written by the direction of one and the same Spirit, who hath therein discovered to us one entire scene of providence, which reaches from one end of the world to the other.

The apostles justify this way of interpreting Scripture prophecies, by the interpretations they give us, both of the ancient prophecies, and of our Saviour's own predictions; of each of these I shall give a remarkable instance. That prophecy of Isaiah, (liii. 4.) "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," without question is principally to be understood, of Christ's undergoing the punishment due to our sins; but yet St. Matthew applies it to the pains which he took in healing men of their bodily infirmities, and his rendering his own life uneasy by the care and trouble he underwent to give ease to others, (Matt. viii. 18.) In like manner, that expression of our Saviour, (John xvii. 12.) "Those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost," was chiefly meant of Christ's care to preserve his disciples in a firm belief of, and adherence to, those truths which he taught them; yet we find St. John

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applies the words to the care that Christ took of their safety, when he yielded himself up to those that came to apprehend him, (xviii. 9.) From hence it appears, that the holy writers themselves suppose, that the expressions of inspired persons may have several senses couched under the words.

The same may be affirmed of that prophecy of Christ, concerning the *destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world,* (Matt. xxiv.) in which it is hard to determine, where our Saviour makes a transition from one subject to the other; this makes it probable, that he had both these events in his eye together, and that several of his expressions were partly verified at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, but were more fully to be accomplished at the *general judgment,* of which that particular judgment was an earnest and forerunner.

The Prophet Isaiah is certainly one of the most difficult of all the prophets, though, perhaps, few are sensible of it, but they that try to explain him: besides the want of ancient records to clear up some historical passages of his prophecy, a difficulty common to him with the rest of the prophets; there are some difficulties, which do in a particular manner attend his writings. The profoundness of his thoughts, the loftiness of his expressions, and the extent of his prophecy, have made the commentaries hitherto written upon him fall short of a full explication of his book; and he that will undertake to fathom the depths of this prophecy, is in great danger of going out of his own. This Prophet seems to have been favoured with an entire view of the gospel-state, from the very birth of the Messias, to that glorious period, when the "kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ." Upon these accounts, as he deservedly holds the first rank in that noble order of prophets; so it may be hoped, the candid reader will favourably receive any attempt that is made, to give some farther light to this prophecy, how imperfect soever. And particularly, I would make one request to him, with which I shall conclude this preface; *viz.* that, in those parts of this exposition, where there is any mention made of the Jews being to be *restored to their own land* upon their conversion, and some other particulars relating to that glorious state of the church, which we may from prophetical grounds of Scripture expect to come to pass in the *latter times* of the world, there he would not judge of what is said upon these obscure subjects as so many positive assertions, but only as probable conjectures, and such as the words of the text may fairly be supposed to favour. For in these and such-like abstruse matters, which at present lie hid in their causes, and in the abyss of Providence, a modest man should not pretend to be *wise above that which is* plainly and expressly *written.*

N. B. The additions inserted in the third edition, (fol. 1730.) *are distinguished by this mark* [].

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

Isaiah prophesied above sixty years, computing from the year in which Uzziah died, when he was solemnly called to the prophetical office, (Isa. vi. 1.) to the end of Hezekiah's reign; whom he is said to have outlived, and to have been put to death by Manasses, his body being sawn in the middle, at the command of that wicked king, as the Jewish tradition informs us; to which cruel death the apostle to the Hebrews is thought to allude, (xi. 37.)

St. Jerome, in his preface to Isaiah, tells us, that he was of noble birth, and he is said to have lived at court, and that his daughter was married to king Manasses. His style answers his birth and education, and is lofty and elegant: his metaphors and illustrations are noble, and suitable to the dignity of the subjects he treats of; and he hath this pre-eminence above all the prophets, that he foretells the coming and times of the Messias more clearly and frequently than any of them. Accordingly, he is often cited in the writings of the New Testament, and hath obtained the character of the *evangelical Prophet* in succeeding ages. To this sense the ancient Jews expounded his prophecy, as appears from the character which the son of Sirach gives of him, (Ecclus. xlviii. 24, 25.) *He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last* (τὰ ἔσχατα, the *last,* or *latter times,* an expression signifying the days of the Messias in the Old Testament), and *he comforted those that mourn in Zion; he shewed what should come to pass for ever.*

Besides his prophecy, Isaiah wrote the history of Uzziah's reign, mentioned 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

We may distinguish this prophecy into several parts or sections; the first of which reaches from the beginning of the book to the end of the fifth chapter; the second, from thence to the end of the twelfth; the third is continued to the end of the twenty-seventh; the fourth to the end of the thirty-fifth. Then follows an account of Sennacherib's invasion, and Hezekiah's sickness, which happened at the same time, xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. (that history being a key to explain several passages in the foregoing prophecies), with a brief prediction of the Jewish captivity, (xxxix.) From whence the prophet proceeds to foretell the return from captivity, and from thence takes occasion to set forth the several advances of Christ's kingdom in aftertimes. This seems to be the only subject of a great part of the following prophecies, especially from the sixteenth verse of the fifty-ninth chapter to the end of the book.

Ver. 1. *THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz.*] The two usual ways whereby God communicated his will to the prophets, were visions and dreams, (Numb. xii. 6.) In vision the inspired person was awake, but his external senses were bound up, and as it were laid asleep in a trance. Thus Balaam describes it as to himself, *Who saw the visions of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open,* (Numb. xxiv. 16.) It is called vision, not from any use made of corporeal sight, or that it is entertained with external objects; but because of the clearness and evidence of the things revealed, and the conformity this kind of inspiration bears to the information which the mind receives by corporeal sense. Though sometimes vision is accompanied with external representations; as when Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord *sitting in his temple,* (vi. 1.) and Ezekiel had the description and dimensions of the temple revealed to him in a vision, (Ezek. xl. 2.) and St. John

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had a sight of the *New Jerusalem coming down from heaven*, (Rev. xxi. 10.)

Which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.] His prophecy does chiefly relate to the kingdom of Judah, though he does accidentally speak of the ten tribes, as he does also of the Moabites, Egyptians, &c. the kingdom of Judah itself being concerned in the good or ill which befel their neighbours.

This probably was not the first vision which Isaiah had, (see note on vi. 1.) but is placed at the beginning of his book; because this and the four following chapters, contain a general description of the state and condition of the Jews, under the several judgments which God had brought unto them, and are a fit preface or introduction to the rest of his prophecy.

Ver. 2. *Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken.*] An expression bespeaking men's attention. (Compare xxxiv. 1. Deut. xxxii. 1. Micah i. 2. vi. 1, 2.) It farther signifies an appeal to the world, to angels, and to men. (Compare Deut. iv. 26. xxx. 19. Psal. l. 4.) The holy writers sometimes appeal to inanimate things, to signify the evidence and undeniableness of the truth which they assert: so Joshua tells the Jews, *This stone shall be a witness to us*, (Josh. xxiv. 27.)

I have nourished and brought up children.] God's protection over his people is compared to the care that parents take in nursing and breeding up their children. (See Deut. i. 31. Isa. xlvi. 3, 4. lxiii. 9.)

Ver. 3. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known*, &c.] The holy writers send men to brute creatures for instruction, thereby to upbraid their stupidity. (See Prov. vi. 6. Jer. viii. 7.)

Ver. 5. *Why should you be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.*] The end of God's judgments in this world is men's reformation; and since this people appears to be incorrigible, there is no reason to expect that he should try any farther methods of discipline with them, but consume them all at once. (See Nahum i. 9.) The verse may be thus translated; *To what purpose are ye stricken? ye shall still multiply transgression:* and then the words will be parallel to Jer. ii. 30. *In vain have I smitten your children; they receive no correction.*

Ver. 6. *From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness in it.*] The whole frame of the Jewish church and state is corrupted, and their misery is as universal as their sin which caused it; this makes the nation look like a body overrun with a cancer.

Ver. 7. *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire.*] This relates to the desolations made in king Ahaz's time, by the depredations of the Israelites, the Syrians, the Edomites, the Philistines, and Assyrians; an account of which you may see, 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, &c. compare xxix. 8, 9. of the same book.

Your land, strangers devour it.] A farther description of the same calamities; or else the words may belong to the confederacy of Rezin and Pekah against Judah, mentioned more at large chap. vii.

Ver. 8. *And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard*, &c.] The daughter of Zion is the same with Sion. (Compare lxii. 11. Zech. ix. 9.) Or it may more properly be taken for the inhabitants of Zion, a city being often represented as a mother, and the people as her children. The prophet describes Jerusalem as the only remnant that is left of that once flourishing kingdom; (see ver. 9.) the cities round about it being desolate, and that very place daily threatened to be besieged by its enemies.

Ver. 9. *Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.*] God always preserves a remnant in the heaviest judgments which he brings upon his people. (Compare iv. 2, 3. x. 20. 22. xvii. 6. xxiv. 13. xxxvii. 32.) A type of those few converts among the Jews, who, embracing the gospel, should escape both the temporal and eternal judgments, which came upon the rest of that nation, for their rejecting Christ and his messengers. This remnant are called the Σωζόμενοι, in the New Testament, (Luke xiii. 23. Acts ii. 47.) the word being applied to that sense, from the use of it in the Septuagint. (See that translation upon Isa. xlv. 20. lx. 19. Joel ii. 32. see the note upon x. 22.)

Ver. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom.*] Sodom is called the sister to Jerusalem, (Ezek. xvi. 46. 48.) because of their resemblance in wickedness.

Ver. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord.*] The prophets often speak of the rituals of Moses's law, as of no benefit, without that inward purity which was signified by them. This was a very proper method to prepare men's minds for the reception of the gospel, by shewing them a more excellent way of serving God than the ceremonial law directly prescribes. So that Christ's abolishing the legal rites, which gave the Jews so great offence, was very agreeable to the doctrine of their own prophets, and even foretold by some of them. (See Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.)

Ver. 12. *When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands?*] When God required the Jews to appear before him three times a year, (Exod. xxiii. 17.) the command was to be understood of their coming with hearts full of religious duty towards him, which was signified by that precept, which forbade those that were not cleansed and purified, to come near the temple, (Lev. xv. 31.) or to attend upon any of their solemn feasts, (Numb. ix. 13.) So the performing of their religious services in a careless and indevout manner, was what God had never required of them, and did not answer the intent of his law. The sense of the words is the same with that of Prov. xv. 8. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord:" God is said not to require or command that which he hates and abhors. (See Jer. vii. 31. compare here the following verses.)

To tread my courts.] There were two partitions in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple; the holy place where the altar of incense, the shew-bread, and the lamp were placed; and the holiest of all, into which only the high-priest entered once a year. Besides these, there were several outward courts or apartments, one for the men, another for the women, another, in aftertimes, where the gentiles worshipped, and another where the altar of burnt-offerings stood, allotted to the priests. From these several apartments are taken those expressions of *coming into the courts of the Lord*, and *treading his courts*. Of these courts we are to understand that place of St. Luke, i. 10. where it is said, that *the whole multitude was praying without at the time of incense; i. e.* while that offering was performed in the inner temple by the priest.

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Ver. 17. *Relieve the oppressed.*] Bochart seems to have hit upon the true sense of the original here, *Rectify what is amiss*, or *reform what is corrupt;* or, in St. Paul's phrase, *Purge out the old leaven;* (1 Cor. v. 7.) which literally answers the sense of the Hebrew *hamûts.*

Ver. 18. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.*] The word which is translated, *reason together*, signifies properly for two contending parties to argue the case together; but here it seems to import the effect or issue of such a debate; *viz.* the accommodating their differences. So God, upon the repentance or reformation of the people, engages to pardon all that is past, and look upon them with the same grace and favour, as if they had never offended; for by their *sins being made white as snow*, is meant, by a usual metonymy, the sinners themselves being thoroughly purged from guilt. (Compare Psal. li. 7.)

Ver. 21. *How is the faithful city become a harlot!*] Cities are often represented under the resemblance of women; (see Jer. vi. 2.) as being mothers of their inhabitants: sometimes they are called virgins; (see note on xxiii. 12.) But when they turn lewd and vicious, they are styled harlots. This name is given to the heathen cities of Tyre, (Isa. xxiii. 16.) and Nineveh; (Nahum iii. 4.) but it is applied to Jerusalem chiefly with respect to that solemn covenant made between God and the Jews, often expressed in Scripture by his being married to them; (see Jer. iii. 14. xxxi. 32.) and by idolatry they were guilty of the same falseness against God, as a woman is guilty of by adultery; the sin of idolatry being commonly styled, *Going a whoring after other gods.* (See Bishop Patrick's preface to his Comment upon the Canticles.)

It was full of judgment.] This relates to the first and best times of the Jewish government, under the reigns of David and Solomon.

Ver. 22. *Thy silver is become dross.*] A proverbial phrase, signifying that there is nothing sincere or pure left among them; but the very best things, such as government and the administration of justice, have a great alloy of corruption mixed with them. (Compare ver. 25. Jer. vi. 28. 30. Ezek. xxii. 18, 19.)

Thy wine mixed with water.] Another proverbial speech of the same importance; the LXX. render it more at large, οἱ Κάπηλοί σου μίσγουσιν τὸν οἶνον ὕδατι, *Thy vintners mix thy wine with water*, whence Καπηλεύω signifies to embase by a foreign mixture. (See 2 Cor. ii. 17.)

Ver. 23. *Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves.*] Thy rulers and magistrates are in a state of rebellion against God, and live upon injustice and rapine. (See Hos. iv. 18. Micah iii. 11. vii. 3.)

Ver. 24. *Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.*] An expression borrowed from men's passions, who find some sort of ease and rest in their minds upon venting their anger on just occasions, or in bringing offenders to condign punishment: in like manner, God is described as feeling ease and satisfaction in executing his justice upon obstinate and incorrigible offenders. (Compare Ezek. v. 13. xvi. 42. xxi. 17.) We may farther observe, that God is never said to take pleasure in the punishment of any, but those who have filled up the measure of their iniquities: (see Prov. i. 25, 26. Deut. xxviii. 63.) those whom he corrects *in anger*, as Jeremy expresses it. As to others, the rule of the same prophet holds, that *He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men*, (Lam. iii. 33.) but even sympathizes with their calamities. (See Judg. x. 16. Isa. lxiii. 3.)

Ver. 25. *I will turn my hand upon thee.*] The phrase signifies to fall upon or punish those whom we had spared or connived at before; see Psal. lxxxi. 14. Zech. xiii. 7. 2 Sam. viii. 3. where the phrase is the same in the original, but otherwise understood by our interpreters, who translate it, *To recover his brother.*

And purely purge away thy dross, &c.] See ver. 22. This place foretells some great reformation, (compare Mal. iii. 3.) which shall be brought to pass by separating the bad from the good, and destroying those that are incorrigible. (See Ezek. xx. 38. and notes upon iv. 3.)

Ver. 26. *And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.*] These promises relate, at least in their primary sense, to the restoration of the Jews after the seventy years of captivity, when they had the face of a government restored to them; and their governors, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and others, were remarkable for their integrity. The expression seems to allude to those judges, whom God raised up to the Jews at their first settlement in the land of Canaan, to whom the prophet resembles these rulers, both because they were men of great piety and virtue; and because these latter did not affect the state and title of kings, till the latter times of the Jewish commonwealth. [Compare Jer. xxx. 20, 21.]

After that thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city.] This promise taken in its full extent, relates to more flourishing times of the church than the world hath yet seen. (Compare Zech. viii. 3. compared with ver. 20. of the same chapter: see likewise Isa. iv. 3. xxxv. 8. lii. 1. lx. 21. Zech. iii. 11—13.)

Ver. 27. *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*] When God shall redeem Zion, and restore those that truly turn to him, he will make a remarkable discrimination between the righteous and the wicked; God's judgments will be visible in punishing the latter, and his mercy in saving the former. (See note on v. 16.)

Ver. 29. *For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired.*] The sacrificing in groves and shady places was an ancient rite of idolatry. Learned men observe, by comparing Judg. ii. 13. with iii. 7. that *Baal* and *Ashtaroth* are the same with *Baalim* and *Asheroth*, or the *gods worshipped in groves.* This kind of worship was expressly forbidden in the law; (see Deut. xii. 3. xvi. 21.) and yet prevailed so much in the times of the idolatrous kings, that the practice was not quite laid aside under religious princes. (See 1 Kings xv. 24. xxii. 43.) But the captivity of the Jews had that good effect, that they scarce ever afterward relapsed into idolatry.

If we suppose the words relate to some farther reformation of the church in the latter times, we may observe, that when the prophets speak of an entire reformation of the state of the church, they mention the utter extirpation of idolatry out of it, as if that were one of the last enemies of God and his truth that was to be destroyed. (Compare with this place, Isa. ii. 18. xxvii. 9. xxx. 22. xxxi. 7. xlv. 16. lxv. 16. Hos. ii. 17. Micah v. 13. Zech. xiii. 2. Tobit xiv. 6.)

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And ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen.] See note on lxv. 3.

Ver. 31. *The strong shall be as tow.*] Those that valued themselves for their strength and power, *the mighty ones, who caused terror in the land of the living,* as Ezekiel speaks, (xxxii. 21. 23.) they shall grow feeble.

And the maker thereof as a spark.] The margin reads, *And his work,* which expresses the sense better; *viz.* That both the framers of idolatry and their devices shall perish together, however supported by secular power, or recommended by worldly grandeur.

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

The former part of this chapter describes the promulgation and success of the gospel upon the first coming of Christ; the latter part represents his second coming to judgment: the first and second coming of Christ are often joined together by the prophets: one reason of which may be, because the destruction of the Jewish state quickly followed after the promulgation of the gospel, which is represented in words that denote the general dissolution of all things. See Joel ii. 31. Matt. xxiv. 29. as indeed all God's remarkable judgments are types and forerunners of the last and general one. (See note on xiii. 10.)

Ver. 1. *THE word that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*] *The word,* that is, the vision which concerns the state of the church and people of God in aftertimes, (ver. 2.) Judah and Jerusalem, including the Christian church, who are the true Israel of God. (See note on lx. 14.)

Ver. 2. *And it shall come to pass in the last days.*] The *last days* signify in the prophets the times of the Messias. The Jews commonly divided the times or successions of the world into *three ages,* or periods: The first, *before the law;* the second, *under the law;* the third, *under the Messias.* This being the last dispensation, which God designed should continue till the consummation of all things, it is denoted by the prophets under the title of the last times or latter days. (See Joel ii. 28. compared with Acts ii. 17. Micah iv. 1. compared with Heb. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 20. 1 John ii. 18.) Accordingly St. Paul tells us, that Christ *appeared* ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, *at the consummation of the ages,* or several periods of the world; (Heb. ix. 26.) and speaking of his own times, saith, that *the ends of the world were come,* (1 Cor. x. 11.) τέλη τῶν αἰώνων, *the conclusion of the ages of it.*

The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains.] That is, shall be eminently conspicuous, so as to be the light of the world, and draw all nations to embrace the truths therein professed. (Compare Matt. v. 14.) The Jewish temple stood upon Mount Moriah, (2 Chron. iii. 1.) It is here metaphorically taken for the church, (compare xi. 9. xxiv. 23. xxv. 6, 7. 10. xxvii. 13. lxv. 11. lxvi. 20. Ezek. xvii. 23. xx. 40. xl. 2.) which Daniel prophesies should *become a great mountain, and fill the earth,* (Dan. ii. 35.) This prophecy will not receive its utmost completion, till the destruction of the *four monarchies* there mentioned, and the fulness of the Jews and gentiles are come into the church. (Compare Micah iv. 1. 6, 7. 13.) But yet both these prophecies may be partly fulfilled, in the several advances which Christ's kingdom makes in the world, who is described as *going forth conquering, and to conquer,* (Rev. vi. 2.)

Ver. 3. *And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,* &c.] *i. e.* Let us join ourselves to the Christian church; the phrase alludes to the Jews going up in companies to Jerusalem at the three solemn feasts of the year. (Compare lx. 4. 7. 9. lxvi. 23. Zech. viii. 21, 22. xiv. 16. Jer. xxxi. 6. l. 5.)

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.] See this fulfilled, Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8.

Ver. 4. *And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.*] Both by the power of his word, which is compared to a two-edged sword in Scripture; and by the remarkable judgments he will exercise upon those who are incorrigible. (See Psal. cx. 6. Luke xix. 27. Rev. xix. 15.)

They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.] The state of war is described by Virgil under the same metaphor:

> "Et curvæ rigidum falces conflantur in ensem."
> *Their pruning-hooks are turned into swords.*
> Georgic. 1. *ad fin.*

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.] Peace is mentioned as the distinguishing character of Christ's kingdom: (see xi. 6. lxv. 25. Psal. lxxii. 7. Zech. ix. 10. Luke ii. 14.) and he himself is called the *Prince of Peace,* (Isa. ix. 6.) The spiritual sense of this prophecy implies our Saviour's being the great peace-maker, who should reconcile the Jews and gentiles to God, and to each other, Ephes. ii. 14. (See more in the notes upon xi. 9.) But if we look upon this and the like prophecies, as foretelling the outward peacefulness of Christ's church or kingdom, which the natural sense of the words imports, they seem to relate to some more flourishing state of the church than hath yet been seen upon earth, when Christ, after having subdued all his enemies, shall grant rest unto his faithful servants, (2 Thess. i. 7.) And thus much is implied in the former part of the verse, and will farther appear by comparing Zech. ix. 10. Hagg. ii. 21—23.

Ver. 5. *O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord!*] The prophet addresses himself to those Jews of later times, that should live when the glad tidings of the gospel were published, and exhorts them to make use of those means of grace which God would so plentifully afford them, and not continue stubborn and refractory as their forefathers had done, which disobedience of theirs had provoked him to forsake them: as it follows.

Ver. 6. *Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people.*] This is not an inference from what goes before, as Mr. White pretends, in order to confine the preceding propheey to Isaiah's own time, but is rather an inference from what follows, and should be translated, *For this reason thou hast forsaken thy people, because they be replenished,* &c. (See a like instance, v. 13.)

Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people—because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Phi-

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listines.] The prophet assigns the reason of God's withdrawing his kindness from the Jews of the present age (as there would be a more remarkable rejection of them under the gospel), because of their following the corrupt manners of the idolatrous nations round about them, in seeking to soothsayers and wizards, which God had so expressly forbidden them, (Deut. xviii. 14.) Both the eastern parts that border upon Judea, *i. e.* Syria and Chaldea, were famous for pretenders to this sort of science: (see Numb. xxiii. 7. Isa. xlvii. 13.) and likewise the Philistines, who lay westward of it. (See 1 Sam. vi. 2. 2 Kings i. 2.)

They please themselves in the children of strangers.] They invited or encouraged pretenders to such knowledge from foreign parts: or, they took pleasure in learning the idolatrous practices of the strangers round about them; a thing often forbidden in their law. (See Deut. xii. 30. Exod. xxxiv. 16. 1 Kings xii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 7. *Their land also is full of silver and gold.*] The prophet reproves those who, in the midst of the public calamities, made no conscience of enriching themselves by oppression and injustice. (Compare i. 23. v. 7, 8. see likewise 2 Kings v. 26.)

Their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.] The king was forbidden to *fetch horses out of Egypt,* (Deut. xvii. 16.) which was a country that abounded in horses, of which there was great scarcity in Judea: (see 1 Kings x. 29. Isa. xxxi. 1. xxxvi. 9.) One reason of that prohibition was, that the Jews might not have any alliance with Egypt, which the prophets often reprove them for. Indeed, if they had continued firm in their obedience, they need not have sought the alliance of any of their neighbours. (See Deut. xxviii. 10.)

Ver. 9. *And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself.*] The words denote a universal corruption, that both high and low are given to idolatry: (see Psal. xlix. 2.)

Therefore forgive them not.] *i. e.* Thou wilt not forgive them: the imperative is here taken for the future. (See the like instances, vi. 10. xxiii. 16. Zech. xiii. 7.) God's judgments are sometimes foretold by way of imprecation: (see 2 Tim. iv. 16.) and many of the imprecations of the Psalms may be understood as so many predictions. (See likewise Gen. ix. 25.)

[*Therefore forgive them not.*] If we understand the words in the sense of an imprecation, they are supposed to be uttered against incorrigible sinners; and it is for the glory of God's justice, that such persons should receive the due rewards of their deeds. Compare Nehem. iv. 5. Psal. xxviii. 4. lix. 5. lxix. 27. Jer. xviii. 23.]

Ver. 10. *Enter into the rock.*] The remaining part of the chapter is a prediction of some general judgment that should end in the utter destruction of the Jewish land and government: such was that of the captivity. But many of the expressions are such as relate to the last judgment: (see the note at the beginning of the chapter.) The prophets often take occasion to represent the terrors of the last day, from the particular judgments which should befal some one nation. (See note on xiii. 10. xxiv. 1.)

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord.] The words express the great consternation of wicked men, especially at the day of judgment, whose guilt shall prompt them to cast about where to hide themselves. (See ver. 19. 21. of this chapter, Luke xxii. 30. Rev. vi. 15.)

Ver. 11. *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled.*] *Pride being the beginning of sin,* as the wise man speaks, (Ecclus. x. 13.) God's judgments are more especially levelled against it: and one end of the destructions he brings upon particular countries, and will bring upon the whole world, is to *stain the pride of all worldly glory,* as our prophet speaks, (xxiii. 9.) and to convince men that there is nothing in this world worth men's setting their hearts upon. (Compare xxvi. 5.)

Ver. 13. *And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan.*] *i. e.* The great and principal persons of any city or nation. (See the same metaphor, x. 33, 34. xiv. 8. xxxvii. 24.)

Ver. 14. *And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up.*] The words may signify greater or lesser magistrates. (Compare Psal. lxxii. 3.)

Ver. 15. *And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall.*] Upon all the cities and towns of strength.

Ver. 16. *And upon all the ships of Tarshish.*] Bochart does probably guess, that Tarshish, in its primary signification, was a port in Spain, called afterward Tartessus. But it likewise appears, by comparing 1 Kings xxii. 48. with 2 Chron. xx. 36. that there was a place of the same name near Ophir, famous for its gold; which Ophir the same learned person places in India; (see his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27. iii. 7.) and Huetius, in the eastern coast of Africa, (lib. de Navigat. Solomonis, cap. 2.) Wherever this Tarshish stood (and it is not unlikely that in process of time this name might be given to more places than one), it was famous in former times for the traffic of the Phœnicians, who were the first merchant adventurers. From thence, *ships of Tarshish* signify in Scripture any trading or merchant ships. Accordingly here the Septuagint render the words, *ships of the sea,* as our old English translation does, Psal. xlviii. 6. The words here, joined with what follows, *and upon all pleasant pictures,* denote the destruction of all fine and elegant furniture, and those rarities which are brought by sea from foreign parts, in which men are apt to pride themselves. (Compare Rev. xviii. 17—19.)

Ver. 18. *And the idols he shall utterly abolish.*] See note on i. 29.

Ver. 19. *And they shall go into the holes of the rocks.*] See note on ver. 10.

Ver. 20. *In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold—to the moles and to the bats.*] They shall bury their idols under ground, or hide them in some dark corner, as what they are perfectly ashamed of.

Ver. 22. *Cease ye from man.*] *i. e.* From valuing man. (See note on ver. 11.) See the like phrase, Prov. xxiii. 4. *Cease from thine own wisdom; i. e.* from esteeming it.

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains a description of the calamities which should befal the Jews in the declining part of their government, and should at last conclude in a total captivity, (ver. 26.)

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Ver. 1. *FOR, behold, the Lord doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water.*] Bread is commonly called the staff of life: (see Lev. xxvi. 26. Ezek. xiv. 13.) This judgment seems to relate to the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, when bread and water were both very scarce. (See Jer. xxxvii. 2. Ezek. iv. 16.)

Ver. 2, 3. *The mighty man and the man of war, the judge,* &c.] This likewise relates to the same times, particularly to Jehoiachin's captivity, when all the men of note were carried away captive with him. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 14.)

And the prophet.] The same judgment threatened in the times of the captivity, (Ezek. vii. 26.) and actually fulfilled then, as appears by Jeremiah's complaint, (Lament. ii. 9.) *Her prophets find no vision from the Lord.* (See likewise Psal. lxxiv. 9.) Ezekiel was the only prophet that was carried away to Babylon, and we do not find that he had any vision relating to the Jews after the twelfth year of his captivity, which was a year or two after the destruction of Jerusalem, except it was the vision of the temple, (chap. xl. &c.) which related to a scene of things many ages to come.

Ver. 4. *I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.*] When all the eminent persons mentioned ver. 2, 3. are removed, the necessary consequence of that must be, that persons of no understanding or qualifications for government must succeed in their places.

Ver. 5. *And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another—the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.*] The usual effects of a weak and unsettled government, where faction grows too hard for justice, and seditious men dare openly to insult those that are in authority.

Ver. 6. *When a man shall take hold of his brother—saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler.*] Thou hast all manner of necessaries, (see ver. 7.) fit to support the dignity of a ruler.

To take hold of another, is a gesture of entreating his friendly assistance. (See iv. 1. Zech. viii. 23.)

And let this ruin be under thine hand.] Let thy hand, thy power, and interest, support this ruinous state of the government: so some understand the phrase, as if it were spoken by the figure *hypallage;* others thus, *Let this ruinous and tottering government be under thy care and protection.*

Ver. 7. *Make me not a ruler of the people.*] I have not ability to undertake such an office; and the times are so bad, that I will not expose myself to the envy and danger of a high station.

Ver. 8. *Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.*] To provoke the glorious and all-seeing eyes of God, who is said to be *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,* but with abhorrence, (Habak. i. 13.)

Ver. 9. *The show of their countenance doth witness against them.*] It is very uncertain what the word *hacarath* signifies, being never found elsewhere in the Bible: our translators render it, *the show, i. e.* the impudence of their countenance; whereby they put a bold face upon the worst of crimes, and glory in their shame, after the example of Sodom, as it follows. (See i. 10.)

Ver. 10, 11. *Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings: Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*] See a parallel place to this, Eccles. viii. 12, 13. Both these texts plainly intimate that God hath appointed a time wherein he will put a difference between the righteous and the wicked: times of great calamity and confusion are proper seasons to put men in mind that God will one day rectify these disorders.

Ver. 12. *As for my people, children are their oppressors.*] See ver. 4. The words may be rendered, *Their oppressors glean them; i.e.* take from them that poor remainder of their substance, which the former calamities had left: the word is used for gleaning grapes, after the main vintage is already gathered, Deut. xxiv. 22. (See here, ver. 14.)

And women rule over them.] *Women* signify here, metaphorically, the weakest and most contemptible part of the people, who take upon them to govern their betters. (See ver. 4, 5.) In this sense the word is taken, xxvii. 11. like that of Virgil:

"O vere Phrygiæ, neque enim Phryges."——

O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err.] The margin reads, *They that call thee blessed, i. e.* the false prophets who soothe thee up in thy sins, and foretell nothing but peace and prosperity. (Compare ix. 15, 16.)

Ver. 14. *The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof.*] He will avenge the cause of the poor and oppressed, by those judgments which he is bringing upon the great and honourable. (See ver. 1—3.)

Ver. 15. *What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?*] You squeeze them by your oppression: this is expressed by *flaying their skin, and pulling their flesh from their bones,* Micah iii. 2, 3.

Ver. 16. *Making a tinkling with their feet.*] Some interpret this of chains like a sort of trammels put about their feet, which hindered these nice ladies from making too large strides. (See Dr. Alix's Reflect. upon the Scrip. par. i. chap. 20.) But the words which describe the women's ornaments in this and the following verses are of a very doubtful signification; the modes of every age and country varying so often, that the succeeding fashion makes the former to be quickly forgotten, and the words that express it to be out-dated.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord will discover their secret parts.*] When they shall be carried captive, stripped and bare, without any covering for their nakedness; for such were the barbarous customs of conquerors towards their captives. (See xx. 4. xlvii. 3. Jer. xiii. 22. Micah i. 11. Nahum iii. 5.)

[Ver. 21. *Nose-jewels.*] The word may be translated *jewels for the face* or *forehead,* as it is rendered, Gen. xxiv. 47. Ezek. xvi. 12. But the same phrase is used Prov. xi. 22. where it certainly signifies a *nose-jewel;* and our interpreters translate it to that sense, *As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout.* St. Austin, in his Questions upon Genesis, tells us, it was the custom of the women in Mauritania to hang jewels in their noses; and the same custom is still observed in Persia, Arabia, and other countries, as those who have

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travelled thither inform us. See Harris's Collect. of Travels, par. i. p. 207.]

Ver. 24. *And burning instead of beauty.*] The old English translation reads, *sun-burning*, by way of explication: their faces shall be exposed to the heat of the sun, either by their being made slaves, and forced to toil in the open air, or else in their transportation into foreign parts.

Ver. 26. *Her gates shall lament and mourn.*] As being solitary, and none passing through them, and the courts of judicature, that used to be kept there, being shut up.

And she, being desolate, shall sit upon the ground.] Sitting upon the ground is a sign of the deepest mourning and lamentation: (see Job ii. 13. Lament. ii. 10. Isa. xlvii. 1.) so Jerusalem is here described as a woman bereaved of her children, and lamenting over them in this melancholy posture. And thus she was represented in a medal coined by Vespasian's order, after the destruction of that city by the Romans. (See Mr. Gregory's Observat. chap. 5.)

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

From the second verse the prophet describes the glorious state of the church, which should follow upon its restoration from those calamities described in the former chapter: and the words plainly point at the *conversion* of the Jews in the *latter times* of the world, and the flourishing state of the church, which should follow upon it. This subject is more largely handled in the latter part of this prophecy, particularly chap. liv. lv. and so on to the end of the book.

Ver. 1. *AND in that day shall seven women take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel.*] This verse should have been continued to the former chapter; for it contains another melancholy instance of the calamitous circumstances which should attend the Jewish nation. *Their young men* are said to *fall by the sword;* (iii. 25.) so that there should be *seven women to one man:* who *should take hold of him; i. e.* use importunity to be married, contrary to the natural modesty of their sex, and that upon hard and unusual conditions of maintaining themselves.

Only let us be called by thy name.] It is the custom of all nations for the wife to be called or distinguished by her husband's name. Thus we read of Mary the wife of Cleophas, John xix. 25. So among the Greeks and Romans, Hectoris Andromache, Marcia Catonis.

To take away our reproach.] Barrenness was thought a great reproach among the Jewish women, (see Luke i. 25.) and is threatened as a curse to them; (Hos. ix. 14.) as fruitfulness is promised for a blessing: (Deut. xxviii. 4. Psal. cxxvii. 3.) Upon this account the Hebrew women generally married young, (see Selden's Uxor. Hebraica, lib. ii. cap. 8.) and were very desirous of children. (See Gen. xxx. 1. 1 Sam. i. 8.)

Ver. 2. *In that day.*] This phrase often denotes in Isaiah, not the same time with that which was last mentioned, but an extraordinary season, remarkable for some signal events of Providence; called elsewhere, by way of excellence, *the day of the Lord.* (Compare ii. 11, 12. x. 20. xvii. 7. xix. 18.) Just as *that day* denotes the day of judgment in the New Testament, as a time of all others the most remarkable. (See 2 Thess. i. 10. 2 Tim. i. 12. 18. iv. 8.)

Mr. White is forced to own that the expression here cannot be meant of the same time mentioned ver. 1. though elsewhere he is willing to take advantage of the phrase, that he may the better confine the sense of the prophet to some particular juncture, in, or near, his own time: particularly in his notes upon xi. 11. xix. 18. But here even Grotius his leader differs from him, and acknowledges in his notes upon xiv. 21. "That it is usual for the prophets to pass from the threatenings that relate to their own times, to the promises which belong to the times of the gospel."

We may farther observe, that the Scriptures speak of the extraordinary appearances of Christ's kingdom, as ushered in by great tribulations foregoing. (See xxiv. 15. xxvi. 20, 21. Jer. xxx. 7. Dan. xii. 1. Matt. xxiv. 21.) Thus the saints are said to come out of *great tribulation,* Rev. vii. 14. and are here called the *escaped,* and sometimes Σωζόμενοι, as it is expressed in the Greek; (see note on i. 9.) those that are escaped, as it were, out of the fire.

Shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious.] The Messias is often called *the Branch.* See Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12. in all which places the Hebrew reads *Tsemah,* as it does here. But the Septuagint, in the three last places, render it Ἀνατολή, the *east* or *morning light,* and translate it to the same purpose in this place: concerning which sense of the word, see the note on xli. 2.

The church is likewise called the *branch of God's planting,* lx. 21.

And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely.] The spiritual blessings of the gospel are sometimes described under the emblems of fruitfulness and plenty. (See xxvii. 6. xxx. 23. xxxii. 20. xlv. 8. Psal. lxvii. 6. Joel iii. 18. Hos. ii. 22.)

For them that are escaped of Israel.] Those Jews who are converted, and escape that destruction which shall overtake the incredulous and disobedient. This may be partly understood of those that were converted by the preaching of Christ and the apostles; and thereby escaped that vengeance which involved the rest of the nation. (See Acts ii. 40. 1 Thess. ii. 16.) But I conceive it is chiefly meant of those Jews who shall be converted at the end of the world, when the obstinate and incorrigible shall be destroyed, and shall return home from their several dispersions. (Compare xxvii. 12, 13. xlv. 20. lxvi. 19. Ezek. xx. 34—43.)

Ver. 3. *And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem.*] Those that escape the common destruction of those countrymen. (See ver. 2.)

Shall be called holy.] This may relate to the great purity and holiness of the first professors of Christianity, which the apostles often bear witness to, and glory of, in their writings. (See Acts iv. 33. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Philip. ii. 16. Colos. i. 6. ii. 5. 1 Thess. i. 3. 11. 13. 19, 20. 2 Thess i. 4.) But the words look farther, to the conversion of the Jews in the latter times, and that abundant degree of grace and sanctification which shall be conferred upon them, after that the *transgressors and rebels are purged out of them,*

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Ezek. xx. 38. (Compare Isa. i. 27. liii. 1. lx. 21. Zeph. iii. 11. Zech. xiv. 20.)

Even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.] Whose names are written in the book of life among God's elect, to whom the promises made to God's people peculiarly belong. (See Psal. lxix. 28. Ezek. xiii. 9. Philip. iv. 3. Rev. iii. 5. xxi. 27.) The phrase alludes to the registers which were kept of the Jewish tribes and families: (see Ezra ii. 59.) and those that could not prove their pedigree from thence were not admitted to the same rights and privileges which others enjoyed. (See ibid. ver. 62.)

Ver. 4. *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion.*] Whose sins are mentioned, iii. 16, &c. The Septuagint express the sense more fully, and read by way of supplement, *The sons and the daughters of Zion.*

And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.] The sins of cruelty and oppression, (see v. 7.) or of murder and bloodshed, (i. 15.) particularly in killing the prophets, and persecuting God's servants. (See Matt. xxiii. 37. Acts vii. 52.) Or it may signify pollution in general, as the word sometimes is taken. (See Ezek. xvi. 6. Joel iii. 21.)

By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.] By making them pass through the *furnace of affliction*, as it is expressed xlviii. 10. The phrase denotes that severe discrimination which God shall make between the good and the bad, the pure silver and the dross; the better being purified, the worse being consumed in the fire. (Compare Ezek. xxii. 21. Mal. iii. 2, 3.) These expressions may probably allude to that severe trial which all shall undergo at the general conflagration, which is designed for the *perdition of ungodly men;* (2 Pet. iii. 7.) when many of the righteous shall escape with great difficulty, and *be saved as through fire,* 1 Cor. iii. 15. that place being understood of the general judgment by many interpreters, both ancient and modern.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place upon Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.*] A plain allusion to the cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, that conducted and protected the Israelites in the wilderness; (Exod. xiii. 21.) and afterward rested upon the tabernacle, (xl. 38.) In like manner, God promises here to give visible tokens of his presence in, and protection over, the church, and each particular member thereof. Smoke and thick darkness was an emblem of God's presence, as well as a cloud. (See vi. 4. Psal. xviii. 8.)

For upon all the glory shall be a defence.] The saints or living members of the church are called God's glory, because God is glorified in them; (see xlvi. 13. xlix. 3. lxi. 3.) and because the grace and glory of God is in some measure communicated to them: (see John xvii. 22. 2 Cor. viii. 23.) and they are designed to be made partakers of farther degrees of it in the world to come: (see 2 Cor. iii. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 14.) and here God promises, in an especial manner, to protect and defend them. The Septuagint render the words to a plainer sense, and such as the Hebrew will bear, Πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ σκεπασθήσεται, *It* (*i. e.* Zion) *shall be defended with all the glory* (of God): *i. e.* God's glory, or the Divine Schechinah, shall be both a light and a defence to his people. (Compare Zech. ii. 5.)

Ver. 6. *And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.*] God's placing his tabernacle among the Jews, was a token of his dwelling among them, and admitting them under his immediate protection: (see Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.) accordingly, dwelling in God's tabernacle is, in Scripture phrase, equivalent to abiding under his shadow or protection. (Compare Psal. xci. 1. with xxvii. 5. xxxi. 20.) So here it is said, that God's visible presence in his church will be its defence and security from all sorts of calamities and persecutions. The expressions in the latter part of the verse, allude to the moveable tents which travellers carry along with them in hot countries, for a defence against the scorching heat of the sun, and the fierceness of storms and rain. (Compare xxv. 4. xxxii. 2. Rev. vii. 15.)

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains a general reproof of the Jews, for their ingratitude, impiety, excess, and covetousness, for which sins the prophet denounces God's judgments against them by the hands of the Assyrians or Babylonians.

Ver. 1. *NOW will I sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved touching his vineyard.*] As David inscribes his Psalms *to his chief musician;* so the prophet here, speaking in the person of God, directs this hymn or parable, poetically expressed, to his Well-beloved, *i. e.* Christ: the *Beloved* is the *Messias,* called often by that title in the Canticles, by his spouse the church.

[*Now will I sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved.*] The words translated *Well-beloved* and *Beloved,* are in the Hebrew *Jedidi* and *Dodi,* agreeing both in sound and signification, and spoken here of the same person, the *Messias,* who is called *Well-beloved,* in respect of his father being the son of his love, (Matt. iii. 17. Colos. i. 13.) and *Beloved,* in respect to his spouse the church, and known by that title in the Canticles, to which book it is probable the prophet here alludes.]

My Well-beloved hath a vineyard.] The church is often represented under this figure, as appears by the texts quoted here in the margin of our Bibles.

In a very fruitful hill.] See note on vii. 25.

Ver. 3. *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray ye, between me and my vineyard.*] The case is so plain, that God might venture to refer it to themselves, although they were parties concerned. Here the style of the parable is altered from the third person (see ver. 2.) to the first; a variation very common in Scripture; and the sense is the same, whether the words be spoken by God, or by Christ, who is *one with the Father.*

Ver. 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*] From this, among many other texts of Scripture, we may conclude, that those may have sufficient means of grace afforded them, who nevertheless are not actually or effectually converted.

Ver. 5. *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up,* &c.] I will take no farther care of it, but leave

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it to be destroyed and laid waste by the heathens and infidels. (Compare Psal. lxxxi. 12, &c.)

Ver. 7. *And the men of Judah his pleasant plant.*] The living members of the church are called the *branch of God's planting,* lxi. 3. (See likewise Matt. xv. 13. John xv. 2.) The Jews should have been such, and had sufficient means of grace to make them so.

He looked for righteousness, and behold a cry.] Of those that are oppressed.

Ver. 8. *Woe to them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place,* &c.] Woe to them that have such an insatiable desire after increasing their possessions, that they stick at no injustice whereby they may defraud others of their right, (see Micah ii. 2.) So they join one to purchase another, until there is no place left for any neighbours to dwell near them.

Ver. 10. *Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of a homer shall yield an ephah.*] A *bath* and an *ephah* are the same measure, and they contain but the tenth part of a *homer;* (see Ezek. xlv. 11.) By this computation, the harvest should produce but the tenth part of the seed: we are to distinguish between an *omer* and a *homer;* the first letter of the former word in the Hebrew is *aijn,* the first letter of the latter is *cheth:* an *omer* is the tenth part of an *ephah,* (Exod. xvi. 36.) whereas an *ephah* is but the tenth part of a *homer.*

Ver. 12. *They regard not the works of the Lord, neither consider the operations of his hands.*] They consider not the works of his providence, nor lay to heart either his mercies or his judgments.

Ver. 13. *Therefore my people is gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge.*] This may probably relate to the captivity threatened more expressly ver. 26, &c. and spoken of here as if it were already come to pass; a figure frequent in the prophetical writings: (see note on i. 7.) which judgment the prophet says was a punishment of their stupidity and insensibleness of their duty. (Compare i. 3.)

And their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.] Famine and drought are threatened as punishments of idolatry, Deut. xi. 17. (Compare ver. 6. 10. of this chapter.)

Ver. 14. *Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure.*] The word *scheol* signifies the grave or state of the dead; (see note on xiv. 9.) In this sense it is elsewhere joined with destruction. (See Job xxvi. 6. Prov. xv. 11.)

And their glory and their multitude, &c.] These two words are joined together, xvi. 14. in speaking of the destruction of Moab; for the multitude of people is the glory and strength of any state.

Ver. 15. *And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled.*] As men of both ranks joined in the same sin; (see ii. 9.) so they shall share alike in the punishment.

Ver. 16. *But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God, that is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness.*] *Judgment* and *righteousness* are often equivalent terms; (see Eccles. iii. 16.) and then righteousness signifies strict justice, and so the word is used, Isa. x. 22. lix. 17. If we understand the words so here, the sense will be, that God's power and holiness shall be magnified in the judgments he executeth upon the wicked. But we may understand *righteousness* here as opposed to *judgment,* and signifying the same with mercy; (see i. 27. and note on xxxii. 16.) and then the meaning of the latter part of the verse will be, that God's holiness shall be rendered illustrious in his shewing mercy to the righteous (see the following verse); God is said to be *sanctified in those,* in whose preservation or destruction he exerts his power after a remarkable manner. (See Numb. xx. 13. Ezek. xx. 41. xxviii. 22. 25. xxxvi. 23. xxxviii. 16. 23. xxxix. 27.)

Ver. 17. *Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.*] While strangers devour the possessions of those who have grown rich by oppression; (compare i. 7.) the *lambs, i. e.* good men shall be under the peculiar care of Providence, and shall want nothing that is necessary for their support. God is often represented as a shepherd, and his care of the righteous described by their feeding securely in rich pastures. (See Psal. xxiii. 1. Isa. lxv. 10.)

Ver. 18. *Woe to them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.*] Who are industrious in finding out pretences to confirm themselves and others in their evil practices, and still add one sin to another.

Ver. 19. *Who say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it,* &c.] This is an objection often in the mouths of libertines, that God doth not hasten the fulfilling of his promises or threatenings, so as to give them ocular demonstration of their certainty. (See Amos v. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.)

Ver. 20. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.*] That endeavour to confound both the names and the natures of virtue and vice, commend and applaud what is evil, and disparage and discountenance what is good.

That put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.] This reproof of the prophet supposes, that the difference between good and evil, is as self-evident as the most contrary qualities which we are informed of by the report of our senses: and that the advantage which light hath above darkness doth not shine out with a brighter evidence, than the pre-eminence which virtue hath above vice.

Ver. 21. *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.*] Who think themselves too wise to need any instruction, and therefore despise the admonitions of God's prophets.

Ver. 23. *And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.*] By condemning and punishing him, make him look as if he were guilty.

Ver. 24. *Their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.*] They shall be consumed both root and branch. The prophet alludes to the metaphor insisted on at the beginning of the chapter, where he calls the Jews God's *vineyard,* and *his pleasant plant.*

Ver. 25. *And the hills did tremble.*] The mountains and the earth itself are often said to tremble at God's judgments: (see Psal. lxxvii. 18. cxiv. 7. Jer. iv. 24. Micah i. 4. Nahum i. 5. Habak. iii. 10.) which expressions allude to the trembling of Mount Sinai, when God came down upon it, (Exod. xix. 18.) as also to the thunder which accompanies God's extraordinary judgments, and makes the earth tremble. (See Psal. xviii. 7. 13.) And because

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these particular judgments are an earnest of the general judgment, when the whole frame of the world shall be dissolved.

And their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets.] The preterperfect tense is here used for the future: (see ver. 13.) for the words relate to Sennacherib's invasion, or rather to the Babylonian captivity; (see the following verses.) He compares those enemies to lions; (ver. 29.) and by the same metaphor he says that they shall tear the Jews to pieces, and leave their carcasses torn in the midst of the public ways or streets. (Compare 1 Kings xiii. 24.)

Ver. 26. *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far.*] Setting up a standard is a signal for armies to assemble together. (See xviii. 3. Jer. li. 27.) Thus God will gather together the nations that live afar off, and assemble them to fight against Judea. The nations here specified are the Babylonians, who are, in like manner, described as *coming from a far country,* (xxxix. 3. Jer. v. 15.) It is true, Babylon stood upon the river Euphrates; which was once the border of the Jewish kingdom. (See Gen. xv. 19. 1 Kings iv. 21.) From whence it may be argued, that the Babylonians or Assyrians cannot be meant here. But to this it may be replied, that many of their confederates, who made up great part of their army, lived at a farther distance. Indeed, all foreigners were looked upon by the Jews as living a great way off, because they maintained but little commerce with their neighbours. So the queen of Sheba is said to have come *from the uttermost parts of the earth,* (Matt. xii. 42.) whereas she came but from Arabia Felix. This threatening may also be extended to the desolation of Judea by the Romans. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 49. and see the note on vi. 11.)

And will hiss unto them from the ends of the earth.] Will call them by a certain signal. (Compare vii. 18.) *From far,* and *from the ends of the earth,* are equivalent expressions. (See xliii. 6.) The meaning of the phrase is, That the least whisper of God's voice shall be heard from one end of the earth to the other, and shall summon the nations to the place appointed.

Ver. 27, 28, 29. *None shall be weary, or stumble amongst them,* &c.] See a parallel description of a hostile army, Joel ii. 2. 7—10. Where God girds men with strength, their courage and success is irresistible. (See xlv. 1—3.)

Ver. 27. *Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed.*] A girdle was a necessary part of a soldier's habit: (see 1 Kings ii. 5. xx. 11. 2 Kings iii. 21.) for it fastened his armour upon him, and made him more nimble and fit for action. From thence it is taken to signify strength and courage; (Job xxxviii. 3. Isa. xlv. 5.) and to unloose the loins, is to enfeeble and dispirit, (Dan. v. 6. Isa. xlv. 1.)

Nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.] They shall be all well-appointed; and as their courage shall not fail them, so neither shall any defect in their habit or armour retard them, or render them unfit for action.

Ver. 28. *And their wheels like a whirlwind.*] That nothing can stop nor resist. Chariots were a principal instrument of war, and are always mentioned in the ancient accounts of battles, as well in Scripture as in profane authors.

Ver. 30. *And if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.*] Every thing looks black and dismal. The Scripture expresses great calamities by the heavens being darkened, and the sun, moon, and stars, withdrawing their light. (Compare viii. 22. xiii. 10. Jer. iv. 23. Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Joel ii. 10. Amos viii. 9.)

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter, though not the first in order, gives an account of Isaiah's call to the prophetic office (at least, of a new commission to him), together with a prediction of the unsuccessfulness of his ministry, by reason of the hardness of the people's hearts. The like account we have of Jeremiah's call, Jer. i.

Ver. 1. *I SAW the Lord.*] *i. e.* The Divine Schechinah, or the *glory of the Lord,* as St. John explains it; (John xii. 41.) who also assures us, that it was the Logos, or second person of the blessed Trinity who now appeared, this vision having a particular relation to the times of the gospel: (see ver. 9, 10.) It was the unanimous sense of the ancient church, that all the Divine appearances in the Old Testament were made by the Son of God, by whom all the affairs of the church were ordered from the beginning: see this proved both from the New Testament and the fathers, by Bishop Bull, Defens. Fid. Nicen. cap. 1. sect. 1. Dr. Alix hath shewed that the ancient Jews were of the same opinion, in his Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, especially chap. 13—15.

I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.] A description of what the Jews call the Divine Schechinah, or a glorious representation of the Divine Majesty, which was exhibited in a mighty lustre, or flame of light, together with a visible appearance of angels as its attendants. (Compare Exod. xxiv. 10. Ezek. i. 26. Dan. vii. 9, 10. Rev. iv. 2.) The Divine presence is usually represented in Scripture as a bright light, or flaming fire, breaking out of a cloud, or thick darkness. (See Psal. xviii. 12. l. 3. Ezek. i. 5. Dan. vii. 10.) A lively image of both was that pillar of cloud and of fire, which accompanied the Israelites in their journey, (Exod. xiii. 21.) then settled upon the tabernacle, (xl. 38.) and afterward filled the temple, (1 Kings viii. 10.) This argument is handled with great accuracy, by his Grace of Canterbury, in his learned treatise of Idolatry, (chap. 14.)

Ibid. and Ver. 2. *And his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims.*] God is always represented as attended with a numerous train of angels. (See Psal. lxviii. 17. Deut. xxxiii. 2. Dan. vii. 10.) For this reason the cherubims were placed in the temple, as overshadowing the mercy-seat, to which posture the next words here allude, *Above it stood the seraphims;* which might better be translated *above him,* (*i. e.* the Lord) *stood the seraphims.* We read in Ezekiel, (x. 20. xi. 22.) that *the cherubims were under the God of Israel, and his glory was over them above;* but there God is represented as carried by them in a triumphal chariot, which the modern Jews call the *mercavah,* and the Psalmist expresses by God's *riding upon the heavens,* (Psal. lxviii. 33.) and *flying upon the wings of the wind,* (xviii. 10.) The seraphims are called so from their bright colour, like that of flaming fire. (See Ezek. i. 3. Psal. civ. 4.) There seem to be only two

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seraphims represented in this vision, in imitation of the two cherubims over the ark.

[Ver. 2. *Above it stood the cherubims.*] The words might be better translated, *Besides it (i. e. the throne) stood the cherubims,* as attending upon him. So the LXX. understood it, and render it, *The cherubims stood round about him.* The Hebrew word *mimmanal* signifies the same here with *menal,* which is rendered *beside,* Jer. xxxvi. 21.]

With twain he covered his face.] Out of reverence towards God, as being unable to bear the glory of his majesty. (See Exod. iii. 6. 1 Kings xix. 13.)

With twain he covered his feet.] Or lower parts: the Hebrew expresses the nakedness or secret parts by the feet. (See Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xxviii. 57. Judg. iii. 24. Isa. vii. 20.) The expression applied to angels imports those imperfections, to which even the angelical nature is liable, when compared with the infinite purity of the Divine Majesty; see Job iv. 18. the *stars themselves not being pure in his sight,* as the same holy writer speaks, xxv. 5.

With twain he did fly.] This denotes his readiness to execute God's commands.

Ver. 3. *And one cried to another, and said.*] From hence came the custom of singing psalms and hymns alternately, which was used in the Jewish church; (see Ezra iii. 11.) and from thence derived unto the Christian. Thus many interpreters understand St. Paul's words, (Eph. v. 19.) *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns.* The same custom is mentioned by Pliny, in his famous epistle to Trajan, (lib. x. ep. 97.) where he gives an account of the Christians, and, describing their manner of worship, saith, that they do "Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem;" *They sing by turns an hymn to Christ as God.*

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.] God's holiness, or the superlative purity of his nature, implies in it all the rest of his attributes, especially his justice and mercy, which are dispensed by the most exact rules of rectitude. The Christian church hath always thought that the doctrine of the blessed Trinity was implied in this repetition; which is intimated in several other places of the Old Testament, particularly in that form of blessing which God commanded the priests to use in blessing the people, (Numb. vi. 24—26.) "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Where the word Jehovah is thrice repeated, to denote some great mystery, as the Jews themselves acknowledge. The same doctrine is plainly intimated in this prophecy, (xlviii. 16.) as shall be shewed in the notes upon that place. (See the note upon the eighth verse of this chapter.)

The whole earth is full of his glory.] Not only this temple, where there are at present such manifest indications of a Divine presence; but the whole world carries evident impressions of God's majesty. (Compare Rev. iv. 8. 11.)

[*The whole earth is full of his glory.*] The Son of God being the person here represented, (see vi. 1.) this may be understood of the times of the gospel, when *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,* xi. 9. (Compare Psal. lxxii. 19.) The following part of this chapter relates to the promulgation of the gospel, and foretells the Jews rejecting it.]

Ver. 4. *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried.*] The doors shook: the very motion of the wheels of God's triumphal chariot, described by Ezekiel, (see note upon ver. 1.) being compared to *the voice of the Almighty, for its greatness* and terribleness, (Ezek. i. 24. x. 5.)

And the house was filled with smoke.] Or a thick cloud; the sign of God's presence, which filled the temple upon extraordinary occasions. (See 1 Kings viii. 10. Rev. xv. 8.)

Ver. 5. *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone.*] God himself says, that *no man can see his face and live;* (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) *i. e.* unless his life be preserved by a peculiar favour. This made men afraid of approaching the Divine presence; (see Deut. v. 24. Judg. xiii. 22.) especially when they reflected upon their sins, which made them unworthy to appear in the presence of God. (See Luke v. 8.)

For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.] Isaiah was terrified at this vision, and withal sensible that God appeared to him, in order to send him upon some message to the people, to which end he had formerly appeared to Moses, (Exod. iii. 2.) as he did afterward to Ezekiel, (i. 4.) In these words, therefore, he deprecates the undertaking of the prophetical office, as one who had no extraordinary talent in speaking, especially to a people that were not at all disposed to hearken to God's commands. (Compare this place with Exod. vi. 12.) What the prophet here calls *unclean* or unsanctified, Moses there styles *uncircumcised lips;* where he excuses himself from the like employment, both from his own incapacity, and from the cold reception he was like to meet with among the Israelites.

Ver. 6. *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand.*] Signifying thereby the gift of utterance, represented by fiery tongues, Acts ii. 3. and the efficacy of God's word uttered by the prophets, compared elsewhere to fire, (Jer. v. 14. xxiii. 29.) The use of fire, likewise, is to cleanse and purify. (See the following verse.)

Which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.] The altar of burnt-offerings placed near the porch of the temple, where the vision appeared.

Ver. 7. *And he laid it upon my mouth.*] To signify that all the gifts and graces that purify the mind, and enable us for the discharge of any particular function, come from God. (Compare Jer. i. 9.)

Ver. 8. *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send?*] God asks this question, not as if he were not resolved whom to send, but that Isaiah might voluntarily offer his own service. So God is elsewhere introduced as asking questions, not to inform himself, but to condemn, or justify men out of their own mouths. (See Gen. iii. 9, 10.)

Who will go for us?] So God speaks in the plural number, Gen. i. 26. which is justly thought to imply a plurality of Divine persons: for it cannot be said with any probability, that God is described in Genesis as advising with, or communicating his purposes to, the angels, which is the fancy of the rabbins; because the history of the creation takes no notice of angels, and, consequently, there is no ground for interpreting any text in the first chapter of Genesis with relation to them.

Then said I, Here am I, send me.] Since the Divine assist-

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ance communicated to the prophet, ver. 6. he expresses a willingness to undertake that office, which before he was averse to. (Compare Acts xxvi. 19.)

Ver. 9. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not.*] The imperative is put for the future: (see note on ii. 9.) and so the Septuagint here understand it. This threatening is denounced for their former contempt of God's messages. (Compare Matt. xiii. 12, &c.)

Ver. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat,* &c.] The prophets are said to do things when they declare God's purpose of doing them. In this sense, Jeremiah was appointed by God *to root out and destroy, to build and to plant;* (Jer. i. 10.) *i. e.* to declare God's purpose in these matters. In like manner, Ezekiel says, *He was sent to destroy the city;* (xliii. 3.) *i. e.* to prophesy the destruction of it: so here Isaiah is said to *harden the people's hearts, and to blind their eyes, i. e.* to declare this to be the event of his preaching; which prophecy should be more signally accomplished, when the Jews should reject the preaching both of Christ and his apostles.

Make the heart of this people fat.] This St. John expresses by *hardening their heart;* (John xii. 40.) so that it becomes insensible. (Compare Psal. cxix. 70.) God is said to harden men's hearts by those very means of grace, which are in themselves proper to produce a quite contrary effect; but withal he foresees, that meeting with a perverse and refractory temper, they will in the event make them more obdurate; and he is resolved, for great and wise reasons, not to hinder it.

And be healed.] That is, *and their sins be forgiven them,* as St. Mark explains it, Mark iv. 12. So the word *heal* is taken, 2 Chron. xxx. 20. Isa. lvii. 19.

Ver. 11. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant.*] The prophet asks, how long shall this blindness, or obstinacy, and the punishments which it will bring upon this people, continue? To which question God returns an answer to this effect, there is no hope of reformation; the people will be irreclaimable, and God will continue his judgments, till at last they end in a final desolation; their country will be laid waste, and the inhabitants carried away captive to Babylon: and the same incredulity under the gospel will have the same or worse effects; *for the Romans shall take away both their place and nation.*

We may reasonably suppose, that this, and many other prophecies, have a double aspect; that they immediately regard the age wherein the prophet lived, but have a farther prospect to the times of the Messias. For the circumstances of one age may be exactly parallel to those of another; and God, that comprehends all things at one single view, can adapt the same prophecy to answer the event in both cases. This subject is more largely handled in the Preface.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.*] The inhabitants of the land, by God's just judgment, shall be carried captive into a far country: (see note on v. 26.) so that the cities and populous places shall become desolate, and the palaces of great men forsaken. (Compare xxxii. 14.)

Ver. 13. *But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and be eaten,* &c.] The Hebrew may be translated thus, which makes the sense run plainer; *But yet in it shall be* left *a tenth, after it is* [or although it is] *again eaten,* or devoured: the verb *shub,* which is translated here *return,* is often used adverbially, and is translated to that sense by our interpreters, Psal. lxxi. 20. *Thou shalt quicken me again;* where our old translation reads more to the letter of the Hebrew, *Thou didst turn and refresh me.* Thus the word is used, Eccles. iv. 1. ix. 11. *I returned and considered; i. e.* I considered again: and so, I conceive, it should be translated here; for the sense of the verse is plainly this, that although God suffers the Jews to be devoured by repeated judgments; first carried captive by the Babylonians, and afterward destroyed by the Romans; (see note on ver. 11.) yet still he will preserve a remnant: (see i. 9.) called here a *tenth part,* which holy seed shall be a seminary to preserve the nation to aftertimes: just as when a tree is stripped of its leaves, and looks as if it were dead, in winter, yet the root and sap of it remain, from whence arises a new succession of branches and leaves in the spring. According to this interpretation, the words contain in them a promise that God will never utterly reject the whole nation of the Jews, how severely soever he deals with them: which promise is more explicitly mentioned, Jer. xxxi. 36, 37. compared with Rom. xi. 1, 2. 16. 29. The *holy seed* is called here a *tenth,* perhaps in allusion to the tithe under the law, which was set apart from the rest, and consecrated to God's service.

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

The royal family of Judah were under great apprehensions, that the invasion of Rezin and Pekah might put an end to that kingdom: to comfort them, the prophet assures them that their family should not be extinct, but the Messias in due time should arise out of it: and that those two kings and their kingdoms should in a short time be destroyed. But afterward he foretells other grievous calamities that should befal Judea by the invasion of Sennacherib.

Ver. 1. *REZIN king of Syria—went up towards Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.*] But yet he carried away many captives out of Judea, slew many of the people, and restored Elah to his own dominions. (See 2 Kings xvi. 5, 6. 2 Chron. xxviii. 5.)

Ver. 2. *It was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim.*] The whole royal family was much concerned at this news, because it threatened the destruction of their government: and therefore the promise mentioned ver. 13. is made to them. Ephraim is commonly taken in the prophets for the whole kingdom of Israel, that being the chief of the ten tribes. (See ver. 17. of this chapter, and ix. 9. xi. 13. xvii. 3. xxviii. 1. and many instances in the prophet Hosea, particularly v. 3. 5, &c.)

His heart was moved—as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.] The relative [*his*] in the original relates to the word *house,* the whole royal family of Judah being spoken of as one person.

Ver. 3. *Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son.*] This son, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, mentioned

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viii. 3. are the *children whom God gave Isaiah for signs*, ver. 18. (See more of this matter in the notes upon viii. 3.)

[The prophet takes Shear-jashub along with him, because he points to him as a sign of the deliverance of Judea from the invasion of the two kings of Israel and Syria, which now threatened Ahaz and his kingdom. (See the note upon ver. 16.) The word Shear-jashub signifies *a remnant shall return*.] The name probably alludes to the promise made by the prophet, of the people's return from the captivity, (vi. 13.) and imports that God will never wholly cut off his people, but will still leave a remnant, to whom he will make good the promises he gave to their fathers. (See i. 9. vi. 13. x. 21. Rom. xi. 29.) Names are often imposed as signs or tokens of things future. (See Hos. i. 4. 6. 9. John i. 42.)

At the end of the conduit of the upper pool.] There were two pools or lakes which supplied Jerusalem with water; the upper pool, mentioned here and xxxvi. 2. and called Gihon, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. and the lower pool, concerning which, see xxii. 9.

In the highway of the fuller's field.] Where the fullers laid out their clothes a drying, after they had washed them.

Ver. 4. *Take heed, and be quiet.*] An exhortation like that of Moses to the Israelites, (Exod. xiv. 13, 14.) "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," &c.

Fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands.] Which are so far from being able to consume any thing else, that they are almost consumed themselves.

Ver. 6. *Let us make a breach therein for us*, &c.] Let us divide the kingdom, and tear it in pieces by making a party there for ourselves, and setting up a king or viceroy that shall act by our authority.

Ver. 8. *The head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin.*] *i. e.* The kingdom of Syria shall not extend itself beyond its ancient bounds. Damascus shall be the metropolis only of Syria, and Rezin shall have no other royal city under his government besides Damascus.

And within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.] Archbishop Usher hath given the clearest explication of this difficult verse, in his Annals of the Old Testament, ad A. M. 3327. where he explains it, not of the first captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, but of their final deportation by Esar-haddon, who totally dispeopled the land, and brought new inhabitants from Babylon, Cuthah, and other cities of the Assyrians, to inhabit the cities of Israel. (See Ezra iv. 2. compared with 2 Kings xvii. 24.) And then Ephraim or Israel wholly ceased from being a people. This last captivity that learned prelate places in the twenty-second year of Manasses's reign, which is just sixty-five years from the beginning of Ahaz's reign.

Capellus and Grotius correct the text here, and put *shesh* instead of *shissim*, *six* for *sixty*, and so make the two numbers amount but to eleven years, which they suppose to be the space between the date of this prophecy and the captivity of the ten tribes. I had not thought this criticism worth taking notice of, but that Mr. White mentions it with approbation. But I believe he can hardly find a like instance of any number bigger than a decimal, broke into such an unusual partition. Besides, all the present copies of the Hebrew text, and the ancient versions, justify the received reading: and to alter the original, without either authority or necessity, is a presumption not to be allowed in criticising upon profane authors, much less upon sacred ones. It may be farther observed, that this criticism, if it were allowed, doth not solve the difficulty; for it is two-and-twenty years from the date of this prophecy, to the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. Inasmuch as Rezin and Pekah invaded Judea at the beginning of Ahaz's reign, as appears by comparing 2 Kings xv. 37. with xvi. 5. Now Ahaz reigned sixteen years, and after him Hezekiah six years, before that captivity. The occasion of Grotius's mistake appears in his notes upon this place; *viz.* that he did not allow for the interregnum, which all judicious chronologers place between the end of Pekah's reign and the beginning of Hoshea's, which is plainly inferred by comparing the times of the kings of Israel and Judah together.

Ver. 9. *And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.*] The same sort of expression with that of ver. 8. Or else it may be thus translated, *The head of Ephraim which is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son* [shall be broken]; the verb being supplied from the foregoing verse.

Ver. 11. *Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God.*] A sign is a miracle wrought for the confirmation of some message or promise delivered from God: (see Exod. iv. 8. Judg. vi. 17. Isa. xxxviii. 22.) this was usually wrought presently; but sometimes a thing future, where the event is remarkable, is proposed for a sign, as here. (See, likewise, Exod. iii. 12. 1 Sam. ii. 34. Jer. xliii. 9, 10.)

Ask it either in the depth, or the height above.] Either in the heaven or in earth. The Jews were very fond of signs from heaven, as if they were more convincing than any other sort of miracle. (See Matt. xvi. 1.)

Ver. 12. *But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.*] To tempt the Lord is to mistrust his providence, or expect he should give some extraordinary instance of it to confirm our belief: (see Deut. vi. 16. Matt. iv. 7.) but these words of Ahaz, although they have a show of piety, do yet really proceed from despair and unbelief, as appears by the prophet's answer, ver. 13.

Ver. 13. *Hear ye now, O house of David.*] The prophet does not apply himself any farther to Ahaz, as a person who would not regard what he said, but directs his discourse to the house of David, or the royal family, to comfort them under desponding apprehensions: (see ver. 2.) and assures them that God's promises to the family of David should never fail; but have their eminent completion in the Messias, whose birth he foretells in the following words.

Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?] You may reckon it a slight and inconsiderable fault to despise God's prophets, but surely you must needs think it a heinous offence to treat God Almighty after this fashion. Men are elsewhere said to *weary God with their sins*, (Isa. xliii. 24. Mal. ii. 17.) when they tire out his patience; just as they are said to *vex and grieve his Holy Spirit*, (lxiii. 10. Eph. iv. 30.) when they turn a deaf ear to all his admonitions.

Ver. 14. *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign.*] He shall give it unasked, and such a sign as could not enter into your thoughts to desire. This shews that

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the promised sign was an extraordinary miracle, the immediate work of God, such as a son of a virgin is, which therefore must be the genuine sense of the following words.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.] Christ is called *the seed of the woman*, by way of distinction, (Gen. iii. 15.) as not to be born in the ordinary way of generation. The Hebrew word *almah*, most properly signifies a *virgin*, and so it is translated here by all the ancient interpreters; and is never once used in the Scripture in any other sense, as several learned men have proved against the pretensions of the modern Jews. (See particularly Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messias, par. ii. chap. 5.) The primary signification of the word *almah* is *hid*, or *concealed;* from whence it is taken to signify a virgin, because of the custom in the eastern countries to keep their virgins concealed from the view of men, never suffering them to stir out of the woman's apartment.

And shall call his name Immanuel.] This is spoken of the mother, who usually gave the name to the child. (See Gen. iv. 1. xvi. 11. xxix. 32. xxx. 6. 8.) To be *called* is the same in Scripture-phrase as to be; *name* being often put for *thing* in the Hebrew dialect. To this sense the word *dabar* is often used in the Old Testament; and Luke i. 38. the original reads *with God no word shall be impossible; i. e.* no thing: so it is said of Christ, (ix. 6.) *his name shall be called Wonderful, i. e.* he shall be a wonderful person; and (i. 26.) *Jerusalem shall be called a city of righteousness; i. e.* her manners shall answer that title: thus we are to understand the Messiah's being called Immanuel, *i. e.* being really what that name imports; *i. e. God with us;* being both truly and properly God, and called so, ix. 6. and also living or dwelling *with us*, men. In the same sense we are to understand that prophecy of Christ, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) *This is his name whereby he shall be called,* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Several other texts of the Old Testament speak of the Messias as God. (See xxxv. 4. xlviii. 16. Isa. xl. 9, 10. Hos. i. 7. Zech. ii. 10, 11. Mal. iii. 1.)

Ver. 15, 16. *Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.*] According to the judgment of several interpreters, these two verses are a plain proof, that this prophecy, though in its true and natural sense it can be fulfilled in none but the Messiah, yet had an immediate aspect upon some particular event that should quickly happen; *viz.* that within the time that one who is now a virgin could marry, and bring forth a son, and that son come to years of discretion, the two kings of Samaria and Damascus should be destroyed. Huetius embraces this sense, Dem. Evang. prob. ix. cap. 9.

It may, indeed, justly be wondered, that any part of this illustrious prophecy concerning Christ should be supposed applicable to any other person or event. But to this it may be answered, that as all the mercies promised to the Jews, were figures or earnests of the times of the Messias, in whom all the promises of God were verified: (see 2 Cor. i. 20.) so the prophets, in foretelling temporal mercies, are sometimes carried beyond themselves and their subject, if I may so express it, to foretell the blessings of the gospel; and after this extraordinary rapture, they return to the subject which was the immediate occasion of their prophecy. (See the note upon x. 20.)

But other learned men, particularly Archbishop Usher, in his Annals, ad A. M. 3262. suppose this prophecy to be applicable to none but Christ; accordingly that learned prelate explains the fifteenth and sixteenth verses to this sense, *Butter and honey shall he eat; i. e.* Christ shall take upon him the infirmities of childhood, and shall be fed with the common nourishment given to children in those countries, which was milk, or butter and honey. Then he supposes the prophet to point to his son Shear-jashub, whom he took along with him: (see ver. 3.) and to tell Ahaz for his present comfort, that before that child should come to discern good from evil, the land of Israel, and its two confederate kings, should be destroyed by the king of Assyria. To confirm this exposition, it may be observed, that Isaiah mentions but two of his own children, Shear-jashub, here, (ver. 3.) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, viii. 3. and never calls Immanuel his son; from whence we may justly conclude, that he was a distinct person from them both: [and, indeed, the eldest son, or heir of the house of David, and king of Judea: see viii. 8.]

Ver. 15. *Butter and honey shall he eat.*] If we suppose these words applicable to any person that was to be born quickly after the uttering this prophecy, the sense of them will be, that although the invasion of the land, and the siege of Jerusalem, did threaten them with famine, and although, under such public calamities, there might be no encouragement to plough and sow; yet there should not want plenty of other provisions, particularly of butter and honey: (see ver. 22.) such as were the common nourishment of children, by the custom of those countries. (See that custom more at large explained in Cotelerius, and Vossius's note upon the epistle of Barnabas, No. 6.)

That he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.] The sense is better expressed, if we translate it, *Till he know to refuse the evil, and choose the good:* so the particle *le* is used, Lev. xxiv. 12. where our English reads thus: *They put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed to them;* but the sense is plainly thus: *Till the mind of the Lord was,* or *might be shewed to them.* To the same sense it should be translated, Job xxxviii. 13. *Till it take hold of the ends of the earth.*

[Ver. 16. *Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.*] Vitringa thus explains it, Within that space of time allotted for this child (whose birth is foretold, ver. 14.) to grow up out of the state of childhood, *the land shall be forsaken of both her kings.*]

The land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.] The two confederate kings of Samaria and Damascus, who now join their forces together in the land of Israel, (ver. 1.) shall be cut off by the king of Assyria. (See viii. 4. 2 Kings xv. 29. xvi. 9.) Some render the words thus: *The land shall be desolate,* or *forsaken, of whose two kings thou art afraid,* or *whose two kings thou abhorrest:* the verb *katz* signifies first to *dread,* and then to *hate* and *abhor.* (See Exod. i. 12. Numb. xxii. 3.)

Ver. 17. *The Lord shall bring upon thee, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.*] Though God promised Ahaz and his people a deliverance from the practices of Rezin and Pekah, yet their sins would provoke him to send a more

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terrible enemy against them, *viz.* Sennacherib king of Assyria, who should "come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and take them," (2 Kings xviii. 13.) and threaten Jerusalem itself. This would be such a terrible judgment, as had not been felt since the division of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah; and is the subject of several succeeding prophecies in this book.

Ver. 18. *The Lord shall hiss.*] See note on v. 36.

For the fly that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.] Armies are often compared to flies, bees, and other insects; (see Deut. i. 44. Judg. vi. 5. Joel ii. 4. 20. 25. Psal. cxviii. 12. Nahum iii. 17. Rev. ix. 7.) both for their numbers, and for the destruction which they make: (see Exod. viii. 24. and Huetius Quæst. Alnetan. lib. ii. cap. 12.) Assyria and Egypt are often joined together as the two great oppressors of God's people. (See xix. 23. xxvii. 13. Zech. x. 10.) Archbishop Usher, ad A. M. 3294. supposes that the conquest of Egypt by the king of Assyria, foretold in the twentieth chapter of this prophecy, happened before the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and that a great many Egyptians were his auxiliaries in that expedition.

Ver. 19. *And they shall come, and rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks.*] He pursues the same metaphor, and represents this foreign army as so many flies that lie in shoals in lower grounds; and as bees, whose custom it is to get into rocks: (see Deut. xxxii. 13. Psal. lxxxi. 17.) implying that no place should be free from them, and even the strongest and best fortified cities (compared sometimes to rocks: see Numb. xxiv. 21.) should be no security against them.

Ver. 20. *In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria.*] Because shaving the head was used in mourning, (see Lev. xxi. 5.) from thence it is metaphorically used for a great calamity. (See Ezek. v. 1.) And the invasion of an army is particularly resembled by it here, because that leaves a country bare, and strips off all its ornaments, among which the hair hath a principal place. The Assyrian is called a *hired razor*, because God often rewards those whom he makes instruments of his vengeance upon sinners, which is expressed by giving them their hire. (See Ezek. xxix. 18, 19. 2 Kings x. 30.) And as Ahaz hired the king of Assyria to assist him: (see 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8. 2 Chron. xxviii. 21.) so the prophet says, God will hire the king of the same country to destroy Judea, as Tiglath-pilneser did, whom Ahaz had hired. (See ver. 20.) By the *river* is meant Euphrates. (See note on xi. 16.)

The head, and the hair of the feet: it shall also consume the beard.] *i. e.* All ranks and conditions, both high and low. In what sense the *feet* are here understood, see note on vi. 2.

Ver. 21, 22. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep: and it shall come to pass, that for the abundance of milk that they shall give, he shall eat butter.*] The enemies should make such a destruction both of man and beast, that there should want hands and cattle to till the ground, so that the whole land should of itself turn to pasture. And those few inhabitants that should be left, should have neither flocks nor herds to feed in those waste places, the utmost of their stock should be a cow and two sheep, which should give abundance of milk by reason of the plenty of grass, and want of cattle to eat it: whereupon milk and butter should be the chief part of the people's sustenance: compare xxxvii. 30. where it is said, *Ye shall eat this year*, meaning the year of Sennacherib's invasion, *such as groweth of itself*, without ploughing or sowing, as appears by the following words there.

For butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.] He means wild honey, which is found in the woods. (See Matt. iii. 4.)

Ver. 23. *Every place, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns.*] The choicest vineyards, which in times of peace would let for a thousand shekels a year, shall be left uncultivated, to be overrun with briers and thorns, there being no encouragement for any improvements, which men expected every day should be destroyed by the enemy.

Ver. 24. *With arrows and with bows shall men come thither.*] For hunting wild beasts; (see Gen. xxvii. 3.) or else to defend themselves against them.

Ver. 25. *And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.*] The Hebrew may be thus translated, which makes the sense run easy: *And all the hills that are* (or used to be) *digged with a mattock, that the fear of briers and thorns may not come there,* [*i. e.* to clear them from briers and thorns: see the note on xxvii. 9.] *shall be for the sending forth of oxen,* &c. All those hills that used to be carefully manured and turned to vineyards, which were usually planted upon hills, (see v. 1. Psal. lxxx. 11.) shall now lie waste, and be only fit for cattle to graze in: ground untilled naturally turns to pasture; therefore these and the like expressions signify great desolations and destructions both of man and beast. (Compare xvii. 2. xxvii. 10. xxxii. 14.)

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet renews the promises made to Ahaz in the former chapter, which are to receive their utmost completion in the Messias; and he foretells the rejecting of the Jews for not believing on him.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen.*] When the prophets are commanded to write any thing, it signifies first the certainty of the thing spoken of, and then the importance of it, that the memory of it ought to be transmitted to posterity. (See xxx. 8. Dan. x. 21. Habak. ii. 2.) The prophet is commanded to take a *great roll*, either because the words were to be writ in capital letters, *that he that runs may read them;* or else because it was to contain all that part of Isaiah's prophecy which concerns this subject, comprehending the foregoing chapter and the following one. By a *man's pen*, is meant such a pen, and such characters, as are in ordinary use among men. So the *measure of a man*, (Rev. xxi. 17.) is such as is commonly used among men.

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[*Take thee a great roll.*] Compare Zech. v. 1. and then see the note there.]

Concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz.] The word signifies to *run swiftly to the spoil, and make haste to the prey;* and denotes the speedy destruction of the confederate kings of Samaria and Damascus. (See ver. 4.)

Ver. 2. *And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record.*] There were always witnesses to the matrimonial contract: (see Selden's Uxor. Hebraica, lib. i. cap. 2.) the same custom is mentioned, Tobit vii. 14. (or the sixteenth verse, as it is reckoned in some editions) according to the Hebrew copy published by Fagius, which reads the verse thus, *Then he called witnesses, and gave her in marriage in their presence, who signed and sealed the deed which contained the particulars of the dowry which she was to have.*

This circumstance signifies the prophet's contracting himself to a woman, called the prophetess, ver. 3. For there is no necessity that the child here mentioned should be born of the same woman that was mother to Shear-jashub, spoken of vii. 3. the contrary is rather here intimated; nor was it against the law of Moses for a man to take another wife, though the former were supposed to be still living. Accordingly, Hosea is commanded to marry two different women, for a sign to the Jews; Hos. i. 2. iii. 2. a place which very much resembles this. (See the note upon the following verse.)

Ver. 3. *I went unto the prophetess.*] Or, *I approached unto her,* as the word is translated, Lev. xviii. 6. She might, perhaps, have the gift of prophecy, as several other women had: (see Judg. iv. 4. 2 Kings xxii. 14.) or she might be called so, as being the wife of a prophet.

And she conceived, and bare a son.] This was Isaiah's second son, that was given him for a *sign* of the times. (See ver. 18.) The prophets foretold things by actions as well as by words: so Hosea was commanded to *take a wife of whoredoms,* and have children by her, (Hos. i. 2.) to signify the Jews going a whoring after other gods, and being thereupon rejected by the true God. But whether these and such-like figurative representations were really performed, or not, is a great dispute among learned men; for the resolution of which question I shall refer the reader to the learned Dr. Pocock's commentary upon the forementioned place of Hosea, where this question is largely handled.

Ver. 4. *For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.*] In the seventh chapter it was prophesied that the destruction of Samaria and Damascus should come to pass before the child there spoken of should come to years of discretion; (ver. 16.) which words were there explained of the elder son Shear-jashub: now the time drew nearer, and it is here said that the event should be fulfilled before this younger child should be able to speak plain. (See the completion of this prophecy recorded, 2 Kings xv. 29. xvi. 9.)

Ver. 6. *Forasmuch as this people refuse the waters of Shiloah which run softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son.*] It is probable many of the Jews might be secret friends to the two confederate kings, as thinking them an overmatch for the kingdom of Judah, and so were resolved to be of the strongest side. Shiloah was a small river that ran through Jerusalem: (see Nehem. iii. 15. John ix. 7.) and denotes the small strength and forces of the king of Judah, that did bear no greater a proportion to the power of the Assyrian monarch, than a small brook does to the mighty river Euphrates.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory.*] It is usual to resemble multitudes to great waters. (See Psal. cxliv. 7. Rev. xvii. 1. 15.) Especially an army is fitly represented by the inundation of a rapid river, which carries all before it, and leaves the ground waste and desolate: compare xvii. 12, 13. Dan. ix. 26. xi. 10. 22. where the same expressions are to be found which are used in this and the next verse.

Ver. 8. *He shall reach even to the neck.*] The prophet persists in the same metaphor, the words importing the danger which threatened the Jews by reason of this invasion, as a person is in great danger of being drowned when the water comes up to his neck. (See xxx. 28.)

And the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.] *i. e.* His army or his camp shall fill thy land, as the Septuagint very well express the sense. So the *wing of abominations,* as some render the original, Dan. ix. 27. is by many interpreters translated *the abominable army;* which translation is confirmed by the authority of St. Luke, xxi. 20. compared with Matt. xxiv. 15. I observed before, that the prophet never calls Immanuel his son; and here he speaks of him as a distinct person from both the children abovementioned, and in such a style as befits none but him that was to be in an eminent manner the son of David, and king of Israel.

Ver. 9. *Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces.*] The prophet returns to the subject spoken of, ver. 6. and insults over the confederacy of Syria and Israel against Judah, foretelling them that all their united endeavours shall prove abortive, because, saith he, God is with us, the import of the word Immanuel. (See Matt. i. 23.) He will certainly make good his promises to the family of David, which will be eminently fulfilled in raising up Christ to sit on his throne, whose *kingdom shall have no end.*

Give ear, all ye of far countries.] This expression seems to favour that interpretation which expounds the foregoing words of the Assyrians and their associates: (see the note upon v. 26.) but the most distant times and countries may be fitly said to be concerned in the admonition here given; the import of which is, that God will preserve his church, and advance the kingdom of the Messias by such measures as he in his infinite wisdom shall think most proper, in spite of all the united endeavours of men to the contrary. This is a truth often insisted upon in the Scriptures, and is the subject of the second Psalm in particular.

Gird yourselves.] See note on v. 27.

And ye shall be broken in pieces.] Ye shall be discomfited, and all your designs blasted. (Compare Dan. viii. 25.)

Ver. 10. *Speak the word, and it shall not stand.*] Whatever decrees you resolve upon, whatever commands ye give out, in order to their being put in execution, shall come to nought.

Ver. 11. *For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand.*] The spirit of prophecy is expressed by *the hand of*

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the Lord being upon the prophet. (See 2 Kings iii. 15. Ezek. iii. 14. viii. 1.) Accordingly here the words imply that the prophet felt an extraordinary impulse to deliver this message, as from God, containing a doctrine of great importance: (see ver. 13.) who likewise inspired him with courage and presence of mind to discharge his duty in this particular.

Ver. 12. *Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy.*] Or rather, *In all things wherein this people shall say*, &c. Many of the Jews were secret friends to Rezin and Pekah; and this circumstance much increased the fears of that invasion, because it was given out that they had a strong party among the people of Judea: so that it seemed impossible to contend against such an enemy. The prophet is commanded to arm those that heard him against these fears, and exhorts them not to join with the popular cry in this matter.

Ver. 13. *Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*] *Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*, as St. Peter expresseth the sense, 1 Pet. iii. 15. God is the proper object of our fear: (see Psal. lxxvi. 7. Luke xii. 4, 5.) men ought therefore to possess their minds with an awful sense of his power, justice, and faithfulness, and this will preserve them steady in their trust and dependance upon him under the worst circumstances: this is a lesson of great importance, and necessary for our conduct at all times.

Ver. 14. *And he shall be for a sanctuary.*] *i. e.* A refuge and protection. (See Ezek. vi. 16.) The same thing is elsewhere expressed, by *dwelling in the secret place of the Most High*, (Psal. xci. 1.) and *in his pavilion*, or *tabernacle*, (Psal. xxvii. 5. xxxi. 20.)

But for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.] God and his promises, which shall be men's refuge and security, become the occasion of hurt and mischief to unbelievers. Their sins are aggravated thereby, and their punishments increased. (See Matt. xxi. 44.) But this text hath a plain aspect upon Christ: (see Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 8.) the Immanuel, mentioned ver. 8. in whom all God's promises are verified: (2 Cor. i. 20.) but yet the prophets have foretold concerning him, that he should be matter of offence to the Jews, and this their incredulity should in the end be the occasion of their ruin, and the *taking away both their place and nation.* The prophet expressly mentions *both the houses of Israel*, to shew the general rejection of the Jews under the gospel. This very expression is a demonstration that the prophet here enlarges his views beyond the subject of Rezin and Pekah's association, which was the immediate occasion of this prophecy: for, under those circumstances, Israel and Judah were in two different interests, and the prophet exhorts the king and people of Judah to trust in God, who would be their defence against the designs of their brethren of the ten tribes; whereas, this verse speaks of them both as involved in the same sin and punishment.

We may farther observe, that this text is directly spoken of God by the prophet, but applied to Christ and the apostles, in the abovementioned places: (see the like instances in vi. 1. compared with John xii. 41. and xlv. 23. compared with Rom. xiv. 11.) a plain proof that Christ is God, and is described as such by the prophets.

Ver. 16. *Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.*] To *seal*, signifies sometimes to secure or keep safe; in this sense it is joined with *sewing up*, John xiv. 17. the same with *binding up* here. But when the word is applied to a book, it signifies to conceal, or hide from common understandings. (See Isa. xxix. 11. Dan. xii. 4.) God here commands the prophet to deliver his promises, and the several declarations of his will, especially those concerning the Messias, to his faithful servants, to be kept safely by them, and laid up in their memories; and although at present they were as a book sealed up, and not easily understood; yet when the event answered the prediction, they would be a justification of God's truth, and of those who depended upon his word; of which number the prophet professes himself to be one, in the following verse.

The *law* and the *testimony* may signify, in general, any declaration of God's will, so as to comprehend his promises as well as his precepts: thus the Hebrew word *kôk* (equivalent to *torah*, the word used here), which commonly signifies a *law* or *statute*, denotes God's promise and decree, Psal. ii. 6. cxi. 7. and cxix. 151. where David saith, *All thy commandments are true*, the context shews, that the word *commandments* is equivalent to promises: the word *testimony* is used in the same sense, Psal. xciii. 5.

Ver. 17. *And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.*] The prophet still persists in his resolution to depend upon God; though at present, saith he, he doth not give any visible tokens of his presence among us, yet I doubt not but in his due time he will remember his promises, and not suffer any part of them to fail. God is said to *hide his face*, when he does not answer our prayers, or give any marks of his favour and assistance. (See Deut. xxxi. 27. Job xiii. 24. Psal. xliv. 24.)

Ver. 18. *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts.*] These are the words of the prophet, as well as the verse foregoing, though speaking in the person of Christ, whom he here represents; (see Heb. ii. 13.) and the meaning of them is, that he and his children mentioned vii. 3. viii. 3. were remarkable for being visible pledges of God's promises, and remembrancers of his veracity and the people's duty. For which reason as they were admired and respected by well-disposed persons; so they were made objects of scorn and derision to hypocrites and unbelievers. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 46. Psal. lxxi. 7. Zech. iii. 8. Ezek. xiv. 8. Luke ii. 34.)

[The word *mophthim*, translated *wonders*, signifies more properly here *types* or *figures: Shear-jashub* being a sign of a remnant's returning from captivity, (vi. 13.) and *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, a type or figure of the destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Syria; (viii. 1—4.) as a learned prelate hath observed in his Defence of Christianity from the ancient Prophecies, chap. iv. 12.]

Ver. 19. *And when they say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter.*] To *peep* signifies the same with the Latin *pipire;* (see x. 14.) *i. e.* to chirp or to whisper, and so it is translated, xxix. 4. By *peeping* and *muttering* are meant the answers of those who, pretending to familiar spirits, muttered or spoke imperfectly, as if their voice proceeded out of the caverns of the earth: (see xlv.

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19.) or spoke inwardly, so that their words seemed to come out of their belly, from whence they were called Ἐγγαστρίμυθοι, in Greek.

Should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?] i. e. *Should they seek for the living to the dead?* By the dead may be meant idols, which are dead insensible things, (see Psal. cxv. 5, &c.) and for that reason opposed to the *living God*, 1 Thess. i. 9. A great part, likewise, of the heathen idolatry consisted in worshipping dead men; (see Psal. cvi. 28.) and inquiring after oracles which were placed in the temples, and monuments dedicated to their deified heroes. (See lxv. 4.) Upon this account, several mournful and funeral rites were used in their worship; such as cutting their flesh, (1 Kings xviii. 28.) and shaving their heads; (Baruch vi. 31.) which usages were for this reason forbidden to the Jewish priests in particular, (Lev. xxi. 5.) and to the people in general, (Lev. xix. 27, 28.)

Ver. 20. *To the law and to the testimony.*] Have recourse to the oracles of God. (See ver. 16.)

If they speak not after this word, it is because they have no light in them.] Compare Micah iii. 6. Some render the latter part of this verse, *There shall be no prosperity to them;* according to the usual acceptation of *light* for happiness, as *darkness* is put for misery. (See particularly ver. 22.)

Ver. 21. *And they shall pass through it hardly bested and hungry.*] They shall pass through the land, or the earth, mentioned ver. 22. The prophet describes the condition of unbelievers under the public calamities; that they shall wander here and there, be impatient under their pressures, and, in the rage of their despair, curse first God and providence, (compare Rev. xvi. 10, 11.) and then their king, to whose ill conduct they impute a great part of their miseries.

Ibid. and Ver. 22. *And look upward. And they shall look to the earth.*] These two sentences should be joined together, as the Septuagint, and our Old English translation understand the place to this sense, Whether they look upwards to heaven, or downwards to the earth, they see nothing but trouble and distress. (Compare v. 30.)

And they shall be driven to darkness.] Or, *Darkness shall fall upon them, and they shall not be able to fly away from the distress of that* [land], *or that* [time]. For the six first words in the Hebrew text of the ninth chapter ought in all reason to be joined to this; which division of the words is confirmed by the Chaldee paraphrast and the Vulgar Latin, and is indeed necessary for the explaining the prophecy contained in the two first verses of the following chapter. (See more there.)

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet continues to foretell the times of the Messias; the sixth and the seventh verses being an illustrious prophecy of his birth and kingdom. Afterward he returns to describe the calamitous state of the ten tribes, and the provoking sins they were guilty of in the midst of those judgments; which subject is continued to x. 5. The writings of the prophets are very much obscured by the unskilful division of the chapters, which very often break off in the middle of a subject; as, at other times, discourses are joined together, that have no affinity with each other.

Ver. 1. *NEVERTHELESS, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation,* &c.] If we follow the division of the text just now mentioned, and begin this chapter in the original with the words *Kaëth harishôn,* the verse may be thus translated according to Mr. Mede: (see book i. disc. 25. p. 101. of the fol. edit.) *As the first* (or former) *time made vile* (or debased) *the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali;* (when the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser, carried great part of that country captive: see 2 Kings xv. 29.) *so the latter time shall make them glorious, the way of the sea by Jordan, Galilee of the nations, the people that walked in darkness,* &c. This translation exactly agrees with the sense of the text, as it is applied by St. Matthew to our Saviour's preaching in Galilee, by *the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim,* (Matt. iv. 13, 14.) So that to make the Hebrew text correspond with the sense of it given by the evangelist, we must understand it as containing a comfortable promise to those parts of Judea; whereas the contrary is rather suggested in the usual translation of the words. This translation is likewise agreeable to the stops or accents which are placed under the Hebrew text, where we find a full stop put at the word *hicbid,* which is not taken notice of in the common versions.

But if we follow that sense, which the English and most other translations give of the place, we must understand the people spoken of in the second verse to be the same with those mentioned in the first.

By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations.] By the *sea* is meant the sea of Galilee, or the sea of Tiberias: (see John vi. 1.) great lakes being called by the name of *seas* in the Hebrew. This country of Galilee bordered likewise upon the river Jordan; *reneber, Hejarden,* it is in the Hebrew, which might better be rendered, *by the side of Jordan;* the word *reneber* indifferently signifying the *hither* or *farther* side of the river, as Huetius hath proved, Dem. Evang. prop. iv. cap. 14. p. 2. (See likewise Isa. xviii. 1.) Galilee was divided into the *upper* and *lower:* the lower was called, by way of distinction, *Galilee of the nations,* or *gentiles;* because it was first peopled by a mixed multitude that came from several countries, or nations; and therefore are called by the name of *nations,* Gen. xiv. 1. and the *nations of Gilgal,* mentioned Josh. xiii. 23. are supposed by learned men to mean the same with the nations of Galilee, Gilgal being sometimes put for Galilee, as appears by comparing Josh. xv. 7. with xviii. 17. (See likewise 1 Maccab. ix. 2. compared with Josephus, Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 18.)

[*Galilee of the nations.*] Or, the *country of the nations.* So the word *Gelilah* signifies, Josh. xiii. 2. Ezek. xlvii. 8. Joel iii. 4.]

Ver. 2. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light,* &c.] Compare lx. 1. Luke i. 79. Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Ver. 3. *Thou hast multiplied the nation.*] By enlarging the church, and adding daily to the number of believers. (See ii. 2. xxvi. 15.)

And not increased the joy.] There is a different reading in the Hebrew margin from that of the text; the text reads

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lo with an *aleph*, which signifies *not;* the margin *lo* with a *vau*, which signifies *him*. If we follow the marginal reading, the sense will be, *Thou hast increased the joy to him*, or *to it*, which seems most agreeable to the context. If we keep the reading of the text, it may be translated by way of interrogation, *Wilt thou not increase the joy?* Then follows the answer, *They joy before thee*, &c. in the following words.

They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest.] A proverbial expression taken from the great rejoicing always shewed at the gathering in the fruits of the earth. (See xvi. 10. Psal. iv. 8.) The prophet denotes it to be a religious joy, because it is said to be *before God; i. e.* in his presence, and with a grateful acknowledgment of his benefits. So the religious feasts which were made of the holy things are expressed *rejoicing before the Lord*, Deut. xii. 12.

And as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.] Victory is always accompanied with joy and triumph. (See 1 Sam. xxx. 16.) Our Saviour's conquest over sin and Satan is often expressed by his *dividing their spoils*. (See note on liii. 12.) The phrase is taken from the custom of conquerors to divide the spoil among their officers and soldiers, who assisted them in obtaining the victory. (See Judg. v. 30.)

Ver. 4. *For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden* (i. e. *his burdensome yoke*), *and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor.*] A staff or rod being an emblem of authority, it comes to signify a stroke or blow inflicted by a superior, and from thence it is applied to the oppressions of a tyrannical power; or of such conquerors as God makes instruments of his vengeance. (See x. 5. 24. xxx. 31.) So the *staff of his shoulder* means those oppressive burdens which the enemies of God's people laid upon their shoulders: (compare xiv. 25.) and breaking this staff is destroying the power and authority of the oppressor. (See xiv. 5.)

As in the day of Midian.] By the immediate hand of God, without any human aid, as the victory of Gideon over the Midianites was obtained. (See Judg. vii. 22. Isa. x. 26.)

Ver. 5. *For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.*] This discomfiture of God's enemies shall not be effected by the noise and tumult of fighting and bloodshed, but by a sudden destruction, like that of fire from heaven, which consumes in a moment. The first and second coming of Christ are often joined together in the prophets; (as hath been observed in the Argument upon chap. ii.) and what is here said, will receive its ultimate completion at the last day, when Christ shall come in *flaming fire, taking vengeance* on his adversaries. (See 2 Thess. i. 7.) God's vengeance is often described by the metaphor of fire. (See xxx. 33. lxvi. 15.) Some render the verse thus: *For the whole battle of the warrior shall be with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood, which must be burned and consumed by the fire; i. e.* the *spots* of which cannot be cleansed with washing, and therefore are given up to be burnt, the final punishment of Christ's enemies, after they are overcome in battle by him. (See Rev. xx. 9, 10.)

Ver. 6. *For unto us a child is born.*] Part of the prophecy contained in this and the following verse, is applied by the angel to Christ, Luke i. 31, 32. so that no Christian ought to doubt but that the words must be meant of him, the same son prophesied of before, (vii. 14.) and the titles which are here given to this child or son, cannot in any tolerable sense be applied to any other person. Grotius's application of the words to Hezekiah is so unnatural and trifling, that it is a disparagement to any man's judgment to fall in with it, as Mr. White does; and he might with as much probability have followed him implicitly in expounding away the fifty-third chapter of this prophecy, as the place before us.

[The Chaldee paraphrase understands the text in this sense, and thus interprets the latter part of this verse: *Christ the man that endures for ever, whose peace shall be multiplied upon us in our days;* and introduces this prophecy with this preface, *The prophet saith to the house of David.* Compare vii. 13.]

Unto us a son is given.] God's *sending his Son into the world*, especially his *giving him to die for our sins*, is spoken of in Scripture as the greatest gift that God could bestow upon mankind. (See John iii. 16. Rom. viii. 32.)

And the government shall be upon his shoulder.] The weight or burden of the government shall lie upon him; (compare xxii. 22.) the whole management of it shall be committed to him: this properly belongs to Christ, the head of the church, (see Coloss. i. 18.) to whom *all power is given both in heaven and in earth*, Matt. xxviii. 18. (Compare Dan. vii. 14.)

And his name shall be called.] *i. e.* He shall really be what the following titles import. (See note on vii. 14.)

Wonderful.] So the angel that appeared to Manoah, who was the Logos, (see note on vi. 1.) saith, that *his name is wonderful*, (Judg. xiii. 18.) His name *Immanuel* seems denoted in the text, as that which implies in it the wonderful mystery of God *incarnate;* in which respect Christ is said to have *a name that none knows but himself*, (Rev. xix. 12.) Some translate it *wonderful Counsellor;* joining the words together in construction, as all the nouns which follow have an epithet joined to them. *Wonderful Counsellor*, may mean the same with *wonderful in counsel*, a title ascribed to God, (xxviii. 29. Jer. xxxii. 19.) and may fitly be applied to the mystery of our redemption, which the Scripture speaks of as the great masterpiece of the Divine wisdom. (See Eph. iii. 10.)

Counsellor.] *i. e.* Intimate to all his Father's counsels and decrees, *those eternal purposes which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*, as St. Paul speaks, Eph. iii. 10. To the same sense we are to understand those words of St. John, that *the only-begotten Son was in the bosom of the Father*, (John i. 18.) and those of Christ, *None knows the Father, save the Son*, (Matt. xi. 27.)

The mighty God.] The same expression is used x. 21. concerning the God of Israel: Christ is likewise styled *the Almighty*, Rev. i. 8.

The everlasting Father.] *The author of eternal salvation*, as Christ is styled by St. Paul, Heb. v. 9. The Septuagint render the words, Πατὴρ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, *The Father of the world to come;* and the Vulgar Latin follows this translation; which, since the Hebrew words will admit of, I cannot but have a particular regard for it, because I am persuaded it is from the authority of this text, that the state of the gospel, or the kingdom of the Messias, is called in the

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New Testament by the title of μέλλων αἰών, *The age*, or *world to come*. (See Matt. xii. 32. Heb. ii. 5. vi. 5.)

[*The everlasting Father.*] If we follow the common translation, the words are very applicable to Christ. Masters and teachers have a title of fathers commonly given to them. (See 2 Kings ii. 12. vi. 21. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 15.) So our Lord calls his disciples his *children*, (John xiii. 33. xxi. 5.) And St. Paul applies that text of Isaiah, (viii. 18.) "Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me," to Christ and his followers.]

The Prince of Peace.] This title in an eminent manner belongs to Christ. (Compare ii. 4. xi. 6, &c. lvii. 19. Psal. lxxii. 7. Micah v. 5. Luke ii. 14. Eph. ii. 14. 17. Heb. vii. 2.)

Ver. 7. *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*] The Jews write the Hebrew word *lemarbeh* with a *mem clausum*, as they call it, wherein they think some great mystery is implied: this conceit of theirs shews, that there hath been an ancient tradition among them for interpreting this place of the Messias.

Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and judgment, &c.] The Messias is said to sit upon the throne of David, because all the promises concerning the perpetuity of his family and kingdom did chiefly relate to Christ, and were fulfilled in him; (see Gen. xlix. 10.) whose kingdom was truly and properly to be an everlasting kingdom. (Dan. ii. 44. vii. 14.) For the same reason Christ is called by the name of David, (Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Jer. xxx. 9. Hos. iii. 5.) Justice and righteousness are elsewhere spoken of as the characteristics of Christ's kingdom. (See xi. 4. Psal. xlv. 4. 6. lxxii. 1, 2.)

The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.] God shall do this, not out of regard to a man's deserts, but to his own honour, and that there may be always a society of people in the world called by his name, and heirs of the promises which he made to their fathers. (Compare xxxvii. 32.) The redemption of the world is always spoken of as an act of God's free grace and mercy. (See Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8. 2 Tim. i. 9.)

Ver. 8. The remainder of this chapter contains a prophecy against Israel; (see ver. 9.) and was uttered before the carrying away of the ten tribes into captivity.

The Lord hath sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.] He speaks here of the miseries that were antecedent to their captivity; (see ver. 11, 12.) and saith, God hath brought to pass those threatenings which he had before denounced against them by his prophets. The place is parallel to that of Daniel, (ix. 12.) "He hath confirmed his words which he spake against us." Jacob and Israel are synonymous terms here, and so they are used, viii. 17, 18. x. 20. xvii. 3, 4.

Ver. 9. *And all the people shall know, even Ephraim*, &c.] God's hand shall visibly appear in his judgments. But Abraham à Shultens, in his Critical Observations upon Job, notes, that the Hebrew verb *jadang*, which commonly signifies *to know*, is sometimes used for suffering punishment, and in this sense he understands the word here, as also Job xxi. 19. and Judg. viii. 16. where it is said, that with "briers and thorns Gideon taught the men of Succoth;" or as the margin reads, *made them know what they had deserved.*

Ver. 10. *The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.*] The words import the people's slighting God's judgments, as if the damage suffered by them might easily be repaired, and therefore they were not worth minding, or laying to heart; and men, instead of humbling themselves under his mighty hand, took occasion from thence to indulge their pride and luxury: cedars were proper for stately buildings, such as the temple and the king's palace. (See 2 Sam. vii. 2. 1 Kings vii. 15. compare this verse with 1 Kings x. 27.)

Ver. 11. *Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together.*] *Against him*, probably means against Ephraim or Israel, mentioned ver. 9. Rezin the king of Syria was a great ally and support of the king of Israel; (see vii. 1.) so his being subdued and slain by Tiglath-pilneser king of Assyria, (2 Kings xvi. 9.) was a great blow to Pekah and his subjects: for when Tiglath-pilneser had subdued the Syrians, he made them join with his army in invading Israel. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 12. *The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.*] *i. e.* The Syrians from the east, and the Philistines from the west; so the Septuagint understand it. (Compare Joel ii. 20.) The Philistines were ancient enemies to Israel, and took all occasions to give them disturbance.

Ver. 14. *Therefore the Lord shall cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.*] *i. e.* Both great and small. (See the following verse, and xix. 16.)

Ver. 16. *The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.*] When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch. The margin reads, *They that call this people blessed:* the expression is the same with that of iii. 12. (See the note there.)

Ver. 17. *Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows.*] When the people were in his favour, God is said to "rejoice over them to do them good," (Deut. xxviii. 63.) The quite contrary is said here, that whereas in former times God did, like an indulgent father, take pleasure in seeing their young men grow up and flourish; now he would have no regard for the strength of their nation, nor have compassion upon the weak and helpless part of it, but deliver them up alike into the power of their enemies.

For every one is a hypocrite.] The Hebrew word. *haneph* signifies *a lewd*, or *profane person;* and so it is used, Job viii. 13. xiii. 16. xv. 34. and the noun *hanephah* is translated *profaneness*, by our interpreters, Jer. xxiii. 15.

Ver. 18. *For wickedness burneth as a fire.*] Wickedness causeth utter ruin and destruction; it makes men fit fuel for God's vengeance to take hold of. (Compare ver. 19. and Job xxxi. 12.)

It shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest.] It shall make a general destruction of the tall cedars as well as of the lower shrubs. (Compare x. 17, 18. 34.) The Chaldee paraphrast renders the former part of the sentence thus, *It shall consume the sinners and the wicked:* in which sense, *briers* and *thorns* are often used in Scripture, upon the account of their unfruitfulness, and because as thorns presently catch the fire, so destruction lays hold on sinners. Compare xxvii. 4. xxxiii. 12. Micah vii. 4. Psal. lviii. 9. where the words

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may best be rendered, *He shall take them away* (the thorns mentioned just before) *both green and dry.* (See the like expression, Ezek. xx. 47.)

Ver. 19. *Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened.*] Compare v. 30. viii. 22.

Ver. 20. *And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied.*] They shall plunder and devour one another without ever being satisfied or giving over.

They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm.] *i. e.* Those of his own country, and even those of his own blood. (Compare xlix. 26.) This was literally fulfilled, when they were reduced to that extremity, as to *eat the flesh of their own children:* (see 2 Kings vi. 28. Jer. xix. 8.) a judgment denounced for their sins by Moses, (Deut. xxviii. 53.)

Ver. 21. *Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah.*] When those of the ten tribes had preyed upon one another as long as they could, they should turn their rage upon Judah, whom they looked upon as their common enemy, upon the account of their own separation from God's public worship established there. (See vii. 6.)

CHAP. X.

ARGUMENT

The four first verses of this chapter should have been joined to the foregoing, as has been already observed in the Argument of the ninth chapter. The remaining part of the chapter is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Sennacherib, whom God had made the instrument of his vengeance upon others: but when that end of Providence was served, he himself should suffer a more remarkable punishment than that which he had executed upon his neighbours.

Ver. 1. *WOE unto them that decree unrighteous decrees.*] A continuation of the subject treated of in the foregoing chapter, wherein the prophet reproves the sins of the ten tribes, particularly their injustice and oppression, and denounces the judgments they should suffer for the same.

Ver. 3. *And what will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far?*] God is said to visit when he punishes, (Jer. v. 9.) and the time of punishment is called the *day of visitation,* (Jer. x. 15. xi. 23.) The punishment here threatened is said to come from far, *viz.* from Assyria. (See note on v. 26. compared with viii. 4.) The prophets elsewhere mention this as an aggravation of God's judgments upon his people, that he would suffer them to be subdued by foreigners, with whose language they were unacquainted, so that it would be in vain to try to soften them by arguments or entreaties. (See Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15.)

And where will you leave your glory?] Where will you deposit your honours and possessions? To whose keeping or protection will you entrust them, that they be not exposed as a prey to your enemies?

Ver. 4. *Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain.*] The Septuagint and Vulgar Latin join these words with the foregoing verse, to this sense, *Whither will this people fly for refuge to preserve themselves, that they may not bow down, or be subdued among the captives, or destroyed among the slain?* This seems the easiest and most natural sense of the words, taking the particle *bilti* for *lebilti;* which word is used in this sense, Jer. xxiii. 14.

If we follow our own translation, the words import that it is in vain for the Israelites to trust in their own strength, or in the assistance of their allies, such as the Syrians were, since it is from God alone that they must expect deliverance from the impendent evils, who for their sins is justly displeased.

Ver. 5. *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger.*] Here begins a new prophecy which reaches to the end of the chapter, and instructs us in this great and important truth, That God often prospers wicked and tyrannical governments to be his scourge, and the instruments of his vengeance upon others; and when they have done the work which God allotted them, he then punishes them for those very oppressions which they have exercised towards their neighbours, and to which they were carried on purely by their own ambition and covetousness, although Providence made them serviceable to better ends and purposes. The prophet directs this discourse to Sennacherib, king of Assyria. (See ver. 9, 10.)

And the staff in their hand is mine indignation.] Or, *The staff of mine indignation is in their hand.* So the wicked are called *a sword of God,* Psal. xvii. 13. and his *weapons of war,* Jer. li. 20.

Ver. 6. *I will send him against a hypocritical nation.*] Or, *a profane nation,* as the word *haneph* signifies. (See note on ix. 17.) The like commission God gives to Cyrus, (xli. 26. xlv. 1.) and to Nebuchadnezzar, (Jer. xxv. 9.)

Ver. 7. *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.*] The Assyrian's design was purely to extend his conquests, and thereby gratify his own ambition: although God, that can bring good out of evil, made him instrumental in carrying on the designs of his providence. For which reason God justly punishes those very princes for the cruelties they commit, notwithstanding that they are the instruments of his vengeance in committing them; because that is beside their own intention, the wickedness of the facts being altogether their own, and the good ends served by them to be wholly ascribed unto God. Thus God punished Jehu for his cruelty towards the house of Ahab, although he himself gave him a commission (see 2 Kings ix. 7.) to put those very judgments denounced against Ahab's family in execution. (See Hosea i. 4. and the note on Isa. xlvii. 7.)

Ver. 8. *For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?*] He makes his boast that kings are his tributaries, and obey his commands. Upon this account Nebuchadnezzar is styled a *king of kings,* (Dan. ii. 37. Ezek. xxvii. 7.) The same title is given to Artaxerxes, (Ezra vii. 12.) And this very king of Assyria, Sennacherib, is called a *great king* in this prophecy, (xxxvi. 4.)

Ver. 9. *Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?*] Have I not been equally successful against all these cities? some of which lay at a greater distance from Judea, upon the river Euphrates, as Calno, called Calneh, Amos vi. 2. and Char-

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chemish, 2 Chron. xxxv. 20. Others, as Hamath, were upon the confines of the Jewish territories, towards Syria, and therefore called the *entrance of Hamath*, Amos vi. 14. (Compare this place with 2 Kings xviii. 33—35. which fully explains the sense of this and the following verses.)

Ver. 10. *As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols.*] My power hath subdued them, they have not been able to escape out of my hand. (Compare ver. 14. and Psal. xxi. 8.)

Ver. 11. *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and to her idols?*] The prophet speaks in the person of the king of Assyria, who looked upon the God of the Jews, to be no better than the other gods of the countries round about: (see 2 Kings xviii. 35.) which deities, as he thought, sufficiently discovered their weakness in not being able to deliver their own countries and votaries.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria.*] Thus Jeremy foretells the destruction of the king of Babylon, as soon as ever the seventy years of the Jewish captivity are ended, (Jer. xxv. 12—14.) And here, in like manner, God saith, he will *punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria; i. e.* those deeds and achievements which were the effects of his pride and ambition. The word *fruit* is equivalent to *work*. (See Prov. xxxi. 16. 31.) So the *fruits of the Spirit* are the effects of the Spirit, (Gal. v. 22.)

Ver. 13. *For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it; and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people.*] He ascribeth all his success to his own prowess and wisdom, according to the usual pride of such haughty tyrants. (Compare Ezek. xxviii. 3—6.) This success of his appeared in the new modelling the governments of his new conquests, and destroying many of those cities which were formerly frontier towns, and transplanting the people from one country to another, a common practice of conquerors. (See 2 Kings xvii. 6. 24.)

Ver. 14. *And my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people,* &c.] I have made myself master of their substance and treasures, as easily as one takes away a nest of young birds, neither the dam nor the young ones daring to complain.

Or peeped.] It means the same as chirped. (See viii. 19.)

Ver. 15. *Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?* &c.] Men are only second causes and instruments in the hands of Providence: (see note on ver. 5.) therefore the glory ought to be ascribed to God alone.

Ver. 16. *Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness.*] Shall consume his principal men for strength and courage. (Compare Psal. lxxviii. 31.)

And under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.] A sudden destruction is often compared to fire. (See ix. 5.) The expression here denotes that sudden stroke which destroyed the whole Assyrian army, 2 Kings xix. 35. (Compare Isa. xxx. 33.)

Ver. 17. *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame.*] God is called the light of Israel, perhaps in allusion to the pillar of fire which conducted them in the wilderness, and he will now be a consuming fire to devour their adversaries.

Ibid. and Ver. 18. *And it shall burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day, and shall consume the glory of his forest,* &c.] It shall destroy both small and great. (See note on ix. 18.)

Ver. 18. *And they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.*] Losing the colours is both a dishonour and discouragement, and causeth great confusion in an army.

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the trees of this forest shall be few,* &c.] Few men of strength or note in his army shall escape that general destruction: so that a child may be able to keep the muster-roll.

Ver. 20. *And it shall come to pass in that day.*] The expression, *in that day*, is not always confined to the time last spoken of, but often signifies some time that shall be very remarkable for God's mercy towards his people. (See note on iv. 2.) And here it seems to point at that signal time, when there shall be a general conversion of the Jews to God. It is usual with the prophets, when they foretell some extraordinary event in or near their own times, to carry their views on farther, and point at some greater deliverance which God shall vouchsafe to his people in the latter ages of the world. (See the notes upon xxiv. 14. xxx. 19.)

The remnant of Israel.] The same remnant mentioned xxxvii. 32. Concerning the general notion of a remnant, see note on i. 9. vii. 3.

And such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more stay upon him that smote them.] As Ahaz did on the king of Assyria: (see 2 Kings xvi. 7. compared with 2 Chron. xxviii. 20.) who afterward proved the worst enemy the Jews had. They are often blamed for trusting in *an arm of flesh*, and making alliances with idolatrous nations. (See note on ii. 7.)

Ver. 21. *The remnant shall return.*] The explication of the name Shear-jashub, given as a token of the perpetuity of God's promises to one of Isaiah's sons. (See vii. 3. and the notes there.)

Ver. 22. *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall return.*] The remnant so miraculously preserved in Jerusalem from Sennacherib's invasion, (see xxxvii. 31, 32.) were a type or figure of that small number of converts under the gospel, styled σωζόμενοι, Acts ii. 47. (an equivalent expression to that which is used ver. 20. and xxxvii. 31.) *viz.* such as should escape the vengeance which fell upon the main body of the Jewish nation, for their sin in rejecting Christ. (See Rom. ix. 27.) And there will be another remnant of them that shall be saved in the latter times of the world; as we shall have occasion often to take notice of in explaining the succeeding parts of this prophecy. (See the notes upon xxvii. 12, 13. xlv. 20. lxvi. 19.) Concerning the gradual fulfilling of several prophecies, see the Preface, and the notes on ii. 2. vi. 11.

Mr. White, according to his usual manner, inveighs very freely against those who refer the words to some future conversion of the Jews; but I leave it to him to explain how the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who, according to his own interpretation, *were cooped up by their enemies within that city*, can be said *to return home* upon raising the siege.

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The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.] God's judgments are said to *overflow*, when they spread universally; the metaphor being taken from an inundation that sweeps all before it. (Compare viii. 8. xxviii. 15. Dan. ix. 26. xi. 10. 22. 26.) The word *righteousness* signifies here the severity of justice. (See note on v. 16.)

Ver. 23. *For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.*] *Determined* is the same with decreed, or pronounced by the sentence of God, the supreme judge: the word likewise implies that this destruction shall be but for a limited time, not to endure for ever. (Compare xxviii. 22. Dan. ix. 27. xi. 36.) This consumption relates immediately to that desolation which Sennacherib should make over the whole land of Judea: (see 2 Kings xviii. 13.) none but Jerusalem escaping that judgment; but it hath a farther aspect upon that universal desolation which should overspread that country and people after their rejecting the Messias.

Ver. 24. *O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian.*] The promises of deliverance from Sennacherib's invasion are made only to the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem: (see xxxvii. 32, 33.) a type of the elect among the Jews, in whom God will fulfil the promises made to their fathers. (See Rom. xi. 7. 28.)

He shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.] He shall come against Jerusalem with all his force, to make an entire conquest over the Jews, as the Egyptians endeavoured to do, Exod. xiv. 9. The use of the word *staff* is explained before, (ix. 4.)

Ver. 25. *For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger, in their destruction.*] It shall appear by their destruction that mine anger is turned away from thee.

Ver. 26. *And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him.*] *And shall lift up his rod*, as it follows, in opposition to the *rod of the Assyrian*, mentioned ver. 24.

According to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb.] See ix. 4.

And as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.] God shall give as evident tokens of his power interposing for the deliverance of his people, as Moses did when he lifted up his rod for a signal of the Egyptians' overthrow, (Exod. xiv. 26.)

Ver. 27. *His burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck.*] Compare ix. 4. xiv. 25.

And the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.] For the sake of God's chosen people, (especially the remnant mentioned ver. 20, 21.) called *his anointed*, Psal. cv. 15. and likewise for the preservation of the kingdom and priesthood, both which offices were conferred by the ceremony of anointing. But without question the Messias, the *Anointed* in an eminent sense, (as the word signifies) and described as such, Psal. xlv. 7. is principally intended here, who was to rise from the stock of Judah, and whose coming is directly foretold in the following chapter. God preserved the kingdom of Judah from utter destruction, because the Messias was to come from that tribe. (See note on vii. 13.)

Ver. 28—31. *He is come o Aiath, he is passed to Migron; &c.*] In these verses the prophet describes the march of Sennacherib's army, and the consternation which is raised in all the towns and countries through which it passed in its way towards Jerusalem.

Ver. 32. *As yet he shall remain at Nob that day, &c.*] Or, to-day: the prophet describes the army as coming within sight of Jerusalem, so that after one day's march they might sit down before it. Thus the king of Assyria did literally *shake his hand against it*, as it follows, and stood in a threatening posture, as just ready to assault it.

Ver. 33. *The Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down.*] The prophet here, as before, (ver. 18.) describes the destruction of the Assyrian army by the metaphor of cutting down a forest. Princes and great ones are commonly represented by the tallest trees, as the mean people are by the lower shrubs, or the *thickets*, (ver. 34.) Compare xiv. 8. xxxvii. 24. Ezek. xxxi. where the same metaphor is pursued throughout the whole chapter, Dan. iv. 10. Jer. xxii. 6.

Ver. 34. *And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.*] The flower of the Assyrian army shall fall by the stroke of a mighty angel, (2 Kings xix. 35.) Might is often ascribed to angels, (Psal. ciii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 21.) Lebanon was famous for its tall cedars, to which the captains and principal commanders of the Assyrian army are here compared. (See xxxvii. 24.)

CHAP. XI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains an illustrious prophecy of the coming of Christ, and of the advancement which his kingdom should make in the world: but as this advancement is made by several steps and degrees; so the latter part of the chapter, from the tenth verse, relates to the latter times, when the fulness of the Jews and gentiles should come into the church. This prophecy cannot with any probability be understood of Hezekiah, as some would explain it; because Hezekiah was born before Ahaz began his reign, within which time it is certain this prophecy was uttered; and he was actually king long before Sennacherib's invasion, with respect to which juncture of time they are willing to explain this prophecy: beside that, the characters of the person here described can belong to none but Christ.

Ver. 1. *AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his root.*] The prophet persists in the metaphor which he had used in the two last verses of the foregoing chapter: he there represented the Assyrian king and the principal officers of his army, by the resemblance of the tallest trees in the forest; and here he describes the Messias as a small twig or sucker coming out of the family of David, as out of a stock or stem that hath been sorely lopped and impaired, and hath but just life enough left to propagate its kind. (See the like expression, liii. 2.)

[*A rod out of the stem of Jesse.*] The prophet expresses the family of David by *the stem of Jesse*, who was a private man, to imply that the royal-house should then be reduced to a private condition. The Chaldee paraphrase expounds

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this text of the Messias: *There shall come a king out from the sons of Jesse, and Christ shall arise from his sons' sons.*] It is usual for the prophets to take occasion from some great temporal deliverance, to foretell the blessings of the gospel.

Ver. 2. *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.*] The Messias, being the great Prophet foretold b Moses, (Deut. xviii. 15.) is described as more plentifully endued with the gifts of God's Spirit, than any other prophet ever was. (See Psal. xlv. 7. Isa. xlii. 1. lxi. 1. John iii. 34. Acts x. 38.) The gift of sanctification is peculiarly attributed to the Holy Ghost. And since the union of the Logos, or *Word*, with the human nature of Christ, is ascribed by the sacred writers to the operation of the Holy Ghost, all the extraordinary graces consequent to that union, may upon that account be justly attributed to the same principle.

The spirit of wisdom and understanding.] The former may be understood of Divine things, the latter of natural.

The spirit of counsel and of might.] Of *counsel* to form good designs, and of *might*, or courage, to execute them. The word *geburah*, which our translation renders *might*, signifies courage. (Compare xxviii. 6.) This word is often translated Δύναμις by the Septuagint, to the same sense; in which sense it is likewise used by St. Paul, 2 Tim. i. 7. where he saith, *God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power*, or rather of *courage*.

Mr. White is pleased to say, in his argument to this chapter, that this part of the character does not belong to *the meek, humble, and peaceful Jesus*. But surely Christ's bearing witness to the truth of his mission, and laying down his life in the confirmation of what he had preached, were as great instances of constancy and courage, as his sufferings themselves were of meekness and patience. Accordingly he is called *the faithful witness* or martyr by St. John, (Rev. i. 5.) and St. Paul speaks of *the good confession which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate*, as a pattern to his followers, of adhering constantly to the truth, even to death, (1 Tim. vi. 13.)

The spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.] The *knowledge* of the law or will of God, and a disposition to obey it: *the fear* of God may not improperly be ascribed to Christ, who in all things gave God the glory, and professed that he had received all things from him; (see Matt. xi. 26.) and was himself the most perfect pattern of an entire submission and resignation to the will of God; and therefore is said by St. Paul to have been *in that he feared*, or upon the account of his piety, (Heb. v. 7.)

The Septuagint reckon up here seven gifts of the Spirit, answerable to the *seven Spirits of God*, mentioned Zech. iii. 9. Rev. i. 4.

Ver. 3. *He shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.*] In things pertaining unto godliness: he shall lay hold of all opportunities of advancing God's honour, and promoting true piety: this exactly answers that character our Saviour gives of himself; that he made it *his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work*, (John iv. 34.)

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.] *He will not judge according to outward appearance, but will judge righteous judgment*, as our Saviour speaks, John vii. 24.

Ver. 4. *But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.*] It is a great sign of the impartial administration of justice, when the poor are equally regarded with the rich, and protected from the oppressions of the great ones. Accordingly this is a constant character of Christ's kingdom (see Psal. lxxii. 2. 12. Isa. xxvi. 6. with the note there): as the blessings of the gospel are peculiarly promised to the poor, (Matt. v. 3. James ii. 5.) that is, to those who have the true spirit of poverty, which consists in a contempt of this world, and an humble submission to the dispensations of Providence.

And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.] A rod is an emblem of power. (See note on ix. 4.) So the power of Christ in his kingdom is often compared to a rod, (Psal. cx. 2.) and to a *rod of iron*, (Psal. ii. 9.) because it will, in the end, break to pieces all its adversaries. (See Dan. ii. 44. Rev. ii. 27.) This rod is said here to proceed out of the *mouth* of Christ, as it signifies the word of God, containing his threatenings and judgments denounced against sinners. This same word is said by St. Paul to be *sharper than any two-edged sword*, (Heb. iv. 12.) because it will utterly consume and destroy those that continue disobedient, in allusion to the words here: this sword is described as proceeding *out of the mouth of Christ*, (Rev. i. 16.) because it is like a sentence of condemnation pronounced upon the rebellious by him as the Judge of the world. (See John xii. 48.)

The latter part of this verse will eminently be fulfilled in the destruction of antichrist, to whom St. Paul applies it, 2 Thess. ii. 8. (Compare Rev. xix. 21.) Who is by way of eminence called *the wicked one, the man of sin*, and ὁ ἀντικείμενος, the *adversary to God's truth and people*, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. 8.

The *earth* here signifies the ungodly, who are elsewhere called the *world*. (See John vii. 7. xii. 32. xv. 18. xvii. 9. 14.)

Ver. 5. *And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*] A girdle was a mark of honour; (see xxii. 21.) and was used both for strength and expedition. (See v. 27. Psal. lxv. 6. Luke xii. 35.) The expression implies here, that a strict regard to truth, integrity, and justice, will be the honour and stability of Christ's kingdom. (Compare Ephes. vi. 14.) On the contrary, antichrist is described as coming *with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*, or all the arts of *unrighteous deceit*, (2 Thess. ii. 9.) And, without question, nothing hath tended more to the corrupting the truth of the gospel, or weakening the power of it, than the giving encouragement to *pious frauds and forgeries*.

Ver. 6—8. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb*, &c.] These metaphorical expressions note, that every thing shall contribute towards a firm and lasting peace, both inward and outward occasions of disturbances being removed: the great and powerful, that use to oppress their inferiors, being disposed to come to terms of accommodation. This may be meant by the *wolf and the lamb's dwelling together*, and the like expressions that follow. (Compare Ecclus. xiii. 17—19.) But they farther imply that God will protect his people against all persecution and outward violence, which is elsewhere expressed by his *making a covenant*

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for them with the beasts of the field, (Hos. ii. 18. compared with Lev. xxvi. 6. John v. 23. Ezek. xxxiv. 25. see likewise the note upon xxxv. 9.)

Ver. 9. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.*] See note on ii. 2.

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.] These words are a proof that the expressions used in the foregoing verses are metaphorical, and denote that the great change in the outward face of things, under the flourishing state of Christ's kingdom, shall be chiefly owing to the increase of their knowledge in the duties of religion, which, when it is made the governing principle of men's lives, does tame the roughest tempers, and subdue the most boisterous passions; from whence it follows, that such a state of outward peace and tranquillity is not to be expected, but upon greater advancements of holiness than are at present to be seen among the generality of Christians. Some remarkable instances of this kind appeared in that regeneration or renovation of mind and manners of several converts in the primitive church, upon their baptism: for the truth of which facts St. Cyprian and Lactantius appeal to their own and other men's experience who lived in the same times; the former in his Epistle ad Donatum, the latter in his Divine Institutions, lib. iii. cap. 25. the same thing having been before attested by St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

As the waters cover the sea.] *i. e.* The channel of the sea: the means of grace and Divine knowledge are often compared to large streams or rivers of water. (See xii. 3. xliv. 4. lv. 1. John vii. 38, 39.)

Ver. 10. *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse.*] The Hebrew word *shoresh* signifies both a *root* and a *branch* growing out of a root: compare the first verse of this chapter with liii. 3. where it is said of Christ, that *he shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground:* where the sense directs us to explain it rather of a branch, called a *tender plant* just before, since a root does not properly grow *out of,* but *in* the ground: in the same sense Christ is called the *root and offspring of David,* (Rev. xxii. 16.) which words are an allusion to this very place: so the Latin word *stirps* signifies both the stock and the branches springing out of it.

Which shall stand for an ensign of the people.] See the same metaphor, xlix. 22. lxii. 10. The design of setting up a standard is to assemble people together. Thus the first preachers of the gospel, as so many heralds, sent abroad into the several parts of the world, gathered a numerous assembly of the gentiles into the church: hither the gentiles are said *to seek,* or repair, in allusion to the custom among the Jews of repairing to their temple at the solemn festivals. (Compare Deut. xii. 5. and see note on lx. 7.)

And his rest shall be glorious.] The ark is styled *God's resting place,* (Psal. cxxxii. 8. 13. 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.) By the same analogy the church is here called *Christ's rest,* which is said to be *glorious* and flourishing, in allusion to the Schechinah, or cloud of glory, the symbol of God's presence, which covered the tabernacle, (Exod. xl. 34.) and afterward filled the temple, (1 Kings viii. 10.) and then settled itself over the cherubims: (see the note on xxxvii. 16.) The words import, that in the times here spoken of, the church shall be in such a glorious settled state, as shall be visible in the eyes of the world; not in a mean persecuted condition, or forced to remove from place to place to avoid the fury of its persecutors, as the church is described *flying into the wilderness* in the Revelation.

Ver. 11. *The Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people.*] This chapter contains a general prophecy of the advancement Christ's kingdom should make in the world. But, as this advancement is made by different steps and degrees, so the several parts of this prophecy may be supposed to point at different ages or periods of time. (See note on ii. 2.) And I take this part of the chapter from the tenth verse onward, to foretell those glorious times of the church which shall be ushered in by the restoration of the Jewish nation; when they shall embrace the gospel, and be restored to their own country from the several dispersions where they are scattered: this remarkable scene of providence is plainly foretold by most of the prophets of the Old Testament, and by St. Paul in the New. (See Deut. xxx. 3—5. xxxii. 43. Isa. xxvii. 12, 13. xlv. 17, &c. xlix. 6, &c. liv. lix. 20. lx.—lxii. lxv. lxvi. Jer. xxiii. 8. xxx. 8—10. xxxi. 36. 40. l. 4. Ezek. xi. 17, &c. xx. 34. &c. xxxiv. 13. xxxvi. 24, &c. xxxvii. 21. Hos. i. 11. iii. 5. Joel iii. 1, &c. Amos ix. 14, 15. Obad. ver. 17, &c. Micah vii. 14, 15. Zech. viii. 7. 13. x. 6, &c. xii. 10. xiv. 8, &c. Rom. xi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. iii. 16.)

The Lord shall set his hand a second time, &c.] The words imply that this shall be as great a deliverance as that out of Egypt. (Compare Psal. lxviii. 23. Micah vii. 15.)

From Assyria and from Egypt.] See note on ver. 16.

And from Pathros.] A country in Egypt. (See Jer. xliv. 1. Ezek. xxix. 14.)

And from Cush.] See note on xviii. 1.

And from Elam.] *i. e.* Persia.

And from Shinar.] *i. e.* Babylon. (See Gen. xi. 2.)

And from Hamath.] See note on x. 9.

And from the islands of the sea.] The Jews call all those places islands that lie upon the sea-coast, especially the countries upon the Mediterranean Sea, the coast whereof they were best acquainted with. Thus the posterity of Japheth is said to have peopled the *islands of the gentiles;* (Gen. x. 5.) that is, the sea-coasts of Asia and Greece. (See Mr. Mede, book i. discourse 49.) So that the expression of the text may very well comprehend even the European nations, and confutes that cavil of Mr. White's, in his argument of this chapter, against understanding this part of the chapter of the restoration of the Jews in the latter times, because there is no mention made of England, Holland, Germany, &c. where their number is greatest. And it is observable, that generally where the prophet Isaiah foretells the calling of the gentiles, he makes particular mention of the islands: (see xli. 1. xlii. 10. 12. xlix. 1. li. 5. lx. 9.) which many interpreters have looked upon as a plain intimation, that the Christian religion should take deepest root in those parts of the world, which were separated from the Jews by the sea, and peopled by the posterity of Japheth, who settled themselves in *the island of the gentiles.* So that the *islands,* in the prophetic style, seem particularly to denote the western parts of the world, or the European nations: the west being often called *the sea* in the Scripture language. In like manner, some explain the *isles afar off,* mentioned lxvi. 19. of the western parts of the world, and suppose them, with the

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other countries there named, to denote the four quarters of the earth.

Ver. 12. *And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel.*] See ver. 10. The gentiles shall not only come into the church themselves, but shall likewise with one accord, as by a signal, restore all the Jews to their own country, and assemble them from the several dispersions whither they have been scattered. (Compare xliii. 6. xlix. 22. lx. 4. lxii. 10.)

Ver. 13. *The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off,* &c.] When the ten tribes made a separation from Judah, Ephraim was looked upon as the principal tribe of that separation, and is often put for Israel, as that was a distinct kingdom from Judah. (See note on vii. 2.) Thus the word is taken here, and the verse imports, that the quarrels and dissensions that used to be between those two rival kingdoms shall be quite at an end, and they shall both be governed by one king, the Messias. (See Ezek. xxxvii. 16. 22. Jer. iii. 18. Hos. i. 11.) We may farther observe, that in most of the abovementioned prophecies, where the general restoration of the Jews is foretold, Israel and Judah are joined together, as equally sharers in the blessing.

Ver. 14. *But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.*] These people were all borderers upon Palestine, and took all occasions to shew their spite and ill-will against the Jews. Upon which account, in the prophetical dialect, they are often used, in a general sense, for the enemies of God's truth and people. (Compare xxv. 10. xxxiv. 5, 6. Joel iii. 19. Amos ix. 12.) To the same sense, the names of Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon are used in other places. (See particularly xix. 23. Rev. xi. 8.) The meaning therefore of the place is, that God's people should have a complete victory over their enemies, whether they be the associates of antichrist, or of whatsoever other denomination.

They shall spoil them of the east together.] The Hebrews read, *The children of the east:* by which are meant the Arabians in general, and the several sorts of them, as the Midianites, Amalekites, &c. (Compare Judg. vi. 3. vii. 12. viii. 10.) Arabia is commonly called the *east* country in Scripture: (see Gen. x. 30. xxv. 6. Job i. 3. Jer. xlix. 28.) though Mr. Mede is of opinion, that it was called so in respect of Egypt, and that the Jews learned that form of speech during their sojourning there; Arabia lying rather southward of Palestine. (See his works, p. 467.)

Ver. 15. *And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian Sea,* &c.] The word *tongue,* when applied to the sea, signifies a *bay,* and so it is translated, Josh. xv. 2. 5. So that by the *tongue of the Egyptian Sea,* must be meant the bay of the Mediterranean Sea, where the river Nile empties itself into the Mediterranean. By *the river* here is certainly meant the Nile: (compare xix. 5. xxiii. 3.) famous for its seven mouths. So the verse imports the deliverance of the Jews, in the latter times, from their several captivities, which shall be as miraculous as that which was vouchsafed to them by Moses, when, by lifting up his rod, the Red Sea was divided, and gave them a passage out of Egypt, Exod. xiv. 16. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 16. *And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria.*] Compare xix. 23. where the same expression is used: it here denotes the Jews' deliverance from their oppressors, and their very enemies coming into the church, and being made partakers of the same promises with the Jews. Assyria and Egypt were the two flourishing kingdoms which bordered upon Judea, and by turns were the great oppressors of God's people. (See lii. 4. Hos. ix. 3.) Whereupon, in many of the prophecies which mention the restoration of the Jews, and their return from their several dispersions, Assyria and Egypt are joined together, as the two most remarkable places from whence their captivity should return. (Compare xix. 23—25. xxvii. 13. Zech. x. 10, 11.) And whether we understand by *the river,* (ver. 15.) the river Nile, according to the note there, or the river Euphrates, (called *the river* by way of eminence, xxvii. 12. Jer. ii. 18.) as many interpreters do; the sense comes all to one, and imports the same with the phrase of *drying up the waters of Euphrates,* Rev. xvi. 12. which signifies there the removing all impediments that might hinder the return of God's people. The expressions in both these places may be an allusion to Cyrus's draining the river Euphrates when he took Babylon. (Compare xliv. 27. Jer. l. 38. li. 36.)

CHAP. XII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter is a hymn of praise, proper to be used in that triumphant state of the church, described in the foregoing chapter. Of the same use are the hymns recorded xxv. xxvi. and Rev. xxv. 3. Many of the Psalms relate to the same glorious time, particularly Psal. xcii. xcvi. xcvii. cxlix.

Ver. 3. *THEREFORE with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*] From God's mercy and bounty, who *is the fountain of life,* and of all blessings, both spiritual and temporal, (Psal. xxxvi. 9. Jer. ii. 13.) The Jews did use to repeat this verse, when, with a great deal of joy and ceremony, they drew water out of the river of Shiloah upon the last day of the feast of tabernacles; to which custom our Saviour is supposed to allude, John vii. 37.

CHAP. XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins the third part of this prophecy, which reacheth unto the end of the twenty-seventh chapter. After the description of those glorious times which should come to pass in the latter days, the prophet foretells the destruction of God's enemies, and begins with Babylon, whither God's people were to be carried captive, and therefore was a type or figure of antichrist, the great oppressor of God's church in aftertimes. (See Rev. xvii. 5.) And whoever carefully considers several particulars in this and the next chapter, and compares them with the former part of the twenty-first chapter with chap. xlvii. and the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah, which treat of the same subject, will easily find that these prophecies have an aspect beyond the taking of Babylon by Cyrus; inasmuch as the prophets describe this judgment as a decisive stroke, that should thoroughly vindicate the cause of oppressed truth and innocence, and put a final

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period to idolatry, and to all the miseries and oppressions of God's people; several of which particulars shall be taken notice of as the text offers occasion.

Ver. 1. *THE burden of Babylon.*] A *burden*, in the language of the prophets, is a burdensome prophecy, threatening ruin and destruction. This word came, in aftertimes, to be used by way of derision of God's threatenings among the profane Jews, upon which account he forbade the use of it. (See Jer. xxiii. 33, 34, &c.)

Ver. 2. *Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand.*] The use of setting up a banner is for assembling men of arms together; (compare v. 26.) which was for that reason set upon a high hill, that it might be the more taken notice of: (see xviii. 3. xxx. 17.) shaking or lifting up the hand was a token that served to the same purpose. (Compare xlix. 22.)

That they may go into the gates of the nobles.] To list themselves under the service of the several great officers and commanders.

Ver. 3. *I have commanded my sanctified ones.*] That is, those whom I have appointed and set apart for this purpose. To *sanctify war*, in the Hebrew language, is the same as to prepare war. (See Jer. vi. 4. xxii. 7. Joel iii. 9.) To the same purpose, God calls Nebuchadnezzar *his servant*, (Jer. xxv. 9.) and Cyrus *his anointed*, (Isa. xlv. 1.) because they were ordained and set apart by God to be the executioners of his judgments upon those nations whom he had marked out for destruction.

I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger.] Those whom I have endued with strength for the executing my vengeance upon a sinful people. (Compare v. 27. xlv. 1—3. Joel ii. 11.)

Even them that rejoice in my highness.] That take pleasure in executing those commands of mine, which will illustrate my honour and greatness.

Ver. 4. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains.*] Gathering round the banner which was set up there, (ver. 2.) Or else the prophet represents them as described afar off upon the mountains, and coming down from thence to besiege Babylon. The expressions are noble, and contain a lively description of that terror which the appearance of a hostile army strikes into the beholders.

A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together.] Cyrus's army was made up out of many different nations and kingdoms. (See Jer. l. 41. li. 27, 28.)

Ver. 5. *They come from a far country, from the end of heaven.*] Many of Cyrus's auxiliaries came from very distant countries. (See the places of Jeremiah just now cited.) The prophet adds this as an aggravation of the judgment. (See note on x. 3.)

Ver. 6. *It shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*] Whose power and purposes none is able to resist.

Ver. 7. *Therefore all hands shall be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.*] God often strikes a terror into those whom he designs for destruction. (See xxx. 17. Deut. xxviii. 7. 25. Ezek. vii. 17. xxi. 7.)

Ver. 8. *They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth.*] Any sudden unavoidable calamity is fitly represented by the pains of a woman's travail. (Compare xxvi. 17. Jer. xxx. 6. 1 Thess. v. 3.)

They shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.] They shall gaze one at another, like men under an amazement, that do not know which way to turn themselves; and their visages shall be black and ghastly. (Compare Joel ii. 6. Nahum ii. 10.)

Ver. 10. *For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light*, &c.] These, and such-like expressions in the Scripture-phrase, denote great calamities, when every thing looks dark and dismal. (Compare v. 30. viii. 22. Jer. xv. 9. Joel ii. 10. Amos viii. 9, 10.) These metaphors do more particularly signify the downfall of states and governments: (compare xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31. Rev. vi. 12—14. viii. 12.) princes and rulers being sometimes figuratively expressed by the sun, moon, and stars, or the host of heaven. (See xiv. 12. xxiv. 21.) Lastly, it may be observed, that all God's particular judgments being earnests and forerunners of the last and general judgment, the same expressions are common to both. (Compare Joel iii. 15. Matt. xxiv. 29. 2 Pet. iii. 10.)

Ver. 11. *I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*] See xiv. 4—6. 13, 14. and the note upon ii. 11.

Ver. 12. *I will make a man more precious than fine gold.*] This expression denotes the havoc that should be made of such men as were fit to bear arms, which should make them become as scarce as gold, and as valuable: (see the like calamity described iv. 1.) or else the words may import, that the Medes shall spare no man's life, though he would purchase it with gold. (Compare ver. 17.)

Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.] Ophir was a place noted for the best gold, whither Solomon trafficked for it, (1 Kings ix. 28.) though the place was famous for it long before, as appears by the book of Job, xxviii. 16. Some place Ophir in the East Indies, particularly Relandus, in his dissertation upon this subject. Bochart thinks that there was an Ophir in Arabia Felix, which is the place probably meant in Job, though he supposes the Ophir that Solomon traded with to be in India. (See his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27.) Huetius places Ophir in the eastern coast of Africa, where there is a place still named Sophala, which retains some affinity with Ophir, called *Sophir* by the Septuagint, 1 Kings ix. 28. (See his treatise de Navigat. Solomonis, cap. 2.)

Ver. 13. *Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of his place.*] These expressions denote great alterations. (See note on v. 25. and compare Hag. ii. 6. Heb. xii. 27.)

Ver. 14. *And it shall be like a chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up.*] The inhabitants of the country about Babylon, shall fly from place to place like a roe, one of the most timorous creatures that is pursued; and, having lost their leaders, shall wander up and down like sheep that have lost their shepherd. (Compare 1 Kings xxii. 17.)

They shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.] All the auxiliary forces which came to assist the Babylonians, shall make what haste they can to get home again, as people do in a general overthrow. (Compare Jer. l. 16. 1 Kings xxii. 26.)

Ver. 15. *Every one that is joined to them, shall fall by the sword.*] All the associates of the Babylonians, though they be foreigners, shall partake of their fate.

Ver. 16. *Their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes.*] By way of retaliation for the cruelty of the Ba-

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bylonians against the Jews. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. Psal. cxxxvii. 9.)

Their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.] All manner of liberty shall be given to the rapine and lust of the soldiers. (Compare Zech. xiv. 2.)

Ver. 17. *Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them.*] A nation of no account when Isaiah uttered this prophecy: their country being a province under the king of Assyria; (see 2 Kings xvii. 6.) and not erected into a distinct kingdom till Deioces, their first king, took the administration of the government, about the seventeenth year of king Hezekiah. But afterward they grew to be a very considerable people, and made up the principal part of the army which was brought against Babylon by Cyrus (who himself was a Median by the mother's side); which army is upon that account described as coming from the north, (Jer. l. 9. 41.) for so Media lay with respect to Babylon. (See likewise Isa. xli. 25.) The Medians afterward, by Cyrus's means, came to have the chief share in that empire, which he erected upon the ruins of the Babylonian monarchy, which is therefore called the kingdom of the Medes and Persians in Daniel, (v. 28. vi. 8.) though afterward the Persians had the precedence. (See Esth. i. 3. 9.)

Ver. 18. *They shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.*] If these two sentences are not equivalent, the former may be explained, of their ripping up women with child; a piece of barbarity sometimes used by conquerors. (See Hos. xiii. 16. Amos i. 13.)

Ver. 19. *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency.*] The heathen writers give almost an incredible account of the greatness of this city. The most moderate accounts suppose its walls to have been five-and-forty miles in compass. That passage in Jeremy (li. 31.) shews it to be of a vast extent, "One host shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." But Aristotle outdoes even this account, telling us, that "when one part of the city was taken, it was three days before the other part knew of it." (Politic. lib. iii. cap. 3.) The stateliness of the city was what Nebuchadnezzar gloried in, as the height of his greatness, (Dan. iv. 30.)

Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.] See the same threatening denounced against Babylon, Jer. l. 40. 51. 64. Babylon never recovered its ancient splendour after it was taken by Cyrus: but upon the removal of the seat of the empire from thence, by the Persians, it, by degrees, decayed, till it was at last reduced to an utter solitude. (See Strabo, lib. xvi. and Pliny's Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 26.) But this did not come to pass till a considerable time after the taking of the city by Cyrus. From whence we may conclude, that this prophecy looks farther, to another Babylon, mentioned in the Revelation, whose destruction is threatened in the forecited words of Jeremy, (Rev. xviii. 21.) This is a pregnant instance, among many others, that the mystical sense of several prophecies, that is, the sense which is more remotely intended, comes nearer to the letter of the prophecies, than that which some call the literal sense, and think to have been immediately designed by the prophet.

Ver. 20. *Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.*] The Arabians were wandering shepherds that had no certain habitation, but carried their flocks and tents from place to place, for the convenience of pasture: much like the Nomades of Africa. This expression denotes the utmost degree of solitude. It is a great degree of it, for the places where great cities stood to be turned into pasturage. (See xvii. 2. xxvii. 10.) But here it is said, that the ruins of Babylon shall be a place fit only for wild savage creatures to resort to.

Ver. 21. *But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.*] Compare xxxiv. 11. 15. Rev. xviii. 2. It is uncertain what creatures are meant by several Hebrew words in this and the following verse: particularly what the word *searim* signifies, which our English renders *satyrs*. The word originally signifies *goats:* and, it is supposed, that evil spirits of old time appeared in the shape of goats, as the learned Bochart hath proved: (Hierozoic. par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 7.) upon which account the word is sometimes taken for *devils*, and is so translated by our interpreters, Lev. xvii. 7. 2 Chron. xi. 15. But here and xxxiv. 14. it is rendered *satyrs*. The expression is taken from a vulgar opinion, that desolate and forlorn places are inhabited by evil spirits, who have their haunts there. (See xxxiv. 13, 14. Baruch iv. 35. Rev. xviii. 2.) Accordingly our Saviour, in his parable of an unclean spirit, saith, that *he walks through dry* or uninhabited *places*, (Matt. xii. 43.)

[*Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.*] St. Jerome tells us, that, in his time, the ground upon which Babylon stood, was turned into a park for the hunting of wild beasts. See his commentaries upon the place.]

Ver. 22. *And dragons in their pleasant palaces.*] The Hebrew word *tannin* signifies any large creature of the creeping kind, whether upon sea or land. Here it is taken for a great serpent, such as are usually found in deserts and desolate places. (Compare Psal. xliv. 19. Jer. ix. 11. li. 37.) See more of this word in the note upon xxvii. 1.

[*And dragons (or serpents) in their pleasant palaces.*] Travellers relate, that it is dangerous approaching the ruins of that city, for fear of serpents and scorpions which lurk there. See their words in Dr. Prideaux's Connect. of Script. Hist. ad an. A. C. 293.]

And her time is near at hand, and her days shall not be prolonged.] What will certainly come to pass, the prophets commonly speak of as just at hand. (Compare xlvi. 13. Hab. ii. 3. Deut. xxxii. 35. Matt. xxiv. 29.)

CHAP. XIV.

ARGUMENT.

A continuation of the same subject, containing a prediction of the utter downfall of the Babylonian empire, and extirpation of the royal family there, under which description is figuratively represented the destruction of the powers of antichrist; the consequence of which would be the deliverance and restoration of the Jewish nation in particular, and of the church in general.

Ver. 1. *FOR the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet choose Israel.*] This immediately relates to the restoration of the Jewish captivity by Cyrus, as appears by

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comparing Zech. i. 17. ii. 12. Israel is sometimes put for Judah. (See 2 Chron. xxiii. 2. xxviii. 19. Ezek. xiii. 16. Mal. i. 1. ii. 11.) Israel being the name which God gave to Jacob as a mark of his favour, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) it is chiefly made use of by the prophets, when they deliver some gracious promises from the mouth of God, especially such a one as concerns the twelve tribes, who were all equally descended from Jacob, as I doubt not but this prophecy in its ultimate sense does. (Compare xxvii. 6. 12. xliii. 1. 1 Kings xviii. 31.)

And the strangers shall be joined unto them, and shall cleave unto the house of Jacob.] It is probable, that many strangers might be made proselytes to the Jews' religion during their captivity, who were willing to go along with them into Judea, there to enjoy the free exercise of their religion: as we find there was a *mixed multitude* of Egyptians, natives, that accompanied the Jews at their exit, (Exod. xii. 38.) It appears, too, that Cyrus himself acknowledged the God of the Jews to be the true God, (see Ezra i. 2.) and Darius gave orders that sacrifice should be offered daily in the temple for the prosperity of himself and his family, (Ezra iv. 10.) But these were but small beginnings of what should come to pass in the times of the gospel, to which this prophecy does certainly relate, as will appear by comparing it with lvi. 3. 6—8. and the notes there.

Ver. 2. *And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place.*] They shall provide them with all necessary accommodations for their journey. (See Ezra i. 4.) This will have a more signal completion in that restoration of the Jewish nation, which shall come to pass in the latter times. (See xlix. 22. lxvi. 20.)

And the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.] Those that left their own country for the sake of the true religion, would be content to live in an inferior condition among the Jews: and as they became strangers during their captivity, so some of these very people shall become their servants, or, as some understand it, shall become converts to the true religion. This may be the sense of the words, with relation to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity: but, without question, they have a farther meaning in them, and point at those times under the gospel, when those worldly powers, which were great enemies to the truth, shall be converted, and pay a profound submission to the laws of Christianity and the pastors of the church: and having been made *partakers of their spiritual things, shall minister to them in carnal things,* as St. Paul speaks, Rom. xv. 27. (Compare xlix. 23. lxi. 5. and see the notes there.)

Ver. 4. *Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon.*] Compare Hab. ii. 6. The Hebrew word *mashal* signifies not only a proverbial speech, such as was in every body's mouth, but likewise a *parable,* or an acute and excellent saying, drawn up with art, and adorned with rhetorical figures: (see Job xxvii. 1. xxix. 1.) such as are the parables of Jotham and others in the Old Testament, and those of Christ in the New. Of the same kind is this which here follows, made up of *sarcasms* and bitter *ironies:* together with a poetical description of the infernal regions, where all the ghosts of the deceased tyrants are represented as rising out of their places, and coming to meet the king of Babylon, and congratulate his arrival among them: (ver. 9, &c.)

Ver. 5. *The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked.*] This was the Lord's doing, none but he could destroy a power so firmly established. (See the meaning of a *staff* explained in the note upon ix. 4.)

Ver. 7. *The whole earth is at rest, and quiet.*] The people of the earth are at peace, now the great oppressor of the world is gone.

Ver. 8. *Yea, the fir-trees rejoice together at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon.*] Kings and princes are figuratively denoted by these expressions. (See note upon x. 33.) Kings and princes of lesser note were oppressed and ruined by this great tyrant, as well as the common people.

Ver. 9. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming.*] See note on ver. 4. The Hebrew word *sheol,* which our translation renders *hell,* or the *grave,* signifies the state of the dead in general, (see Job iii. 14, &c.) and is indifferently applied to the good and bad. Here it is taken in the worst sense, and denotes the infernal mansions of deceased tyrants. So likewise Ezek. xxxiii. 21, &c. a place exactly parallel to this. Sometimes it signifies the regions allotted to the souls of good men, as particularly when Jacob saith, (Gen. xxxvii. 35.) *I will go down to the grave* [*scheolah* in the Hebrew] *to my son mourning.* Where the word cannot be understood of the grave properly so called, because Jacob thought his son was devoured by some wild beast; but must be meant of the place where he supposed Joseph's soul to be lodged. The Greek word Ἅδης, which answers to *sheol,* is rendered *the place of the dead* by our own interpreters, Ecclus. xlviii. 5. See this subject largely and learnedly handled by Archbishop Usher, in his Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge, chap. 8. and by Bishop Pearson, upon the article Christ's descent into hell.

Ver. 11. *Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols.*] All thy state and glory, thy mirth and jollity. Thus the destruction of Tyre is threatened, (Ezek. xxvi. 13.) *I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease:* that is, all that joy and mirth which attend prosperity. (See likewise xxii. 2. xxiii. 7. of this prophecy.)

Ver. 12. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*] Kings and princes are sometimes represented by the heavenly host. (See note on xiii. 10.) So by Lucifer, we are to understand the king of Babylon, who outshined other kings and princes, as much as the morning star does the other constellations. But the expression does likewise allude to the fall of Satan, the prince of the apostate angels, who is described as *falling from heaven like lightning,* (Luke x. 18.) And the title of *son of the morning,* is common both to the morning star and to an angel; the angels being styled, *morning stars,* Job xxxviii. 7. The fall of the apostate angels, is not directly recorded in the Old Testament; but it is implied in the distinction the holy writers make between good and evil spirits, and is sometimes alluded to by the prophets, when they threaten destruction to proud and insolent tyrants, who, in imitation of the pride of the devil, exalt themselves against God and his truth, and are the instruments of Satan in promoting idolatry and wickedness in the world. (See Ezek. xxviii. 2. 13, 14.)

Ver. 13. *For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into*

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heaven.] Some tyrants have been so extravagant as to affect Divine honours; (see Ezek. xxviii. 2. Acts xii. 23.) and the pretences of Caligula, and other Roman emperors, in this kind are sufficiently known. It is too common among those, whose will is a law, to forget their dependance upon God, and fancy themselves to be all-sufficient, which is in effect to ascribe that honour to themselves which is due to God alone. It was for this crime that Nebuchadnezzar was degraded into a beast, (Dan. iv. 30.)

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.] Above the angels: (see ver. 12.) stars, in the prophetical dialect, signify rulers; (see note on xiii. 10.) and, according to the subject matter, denote governors either in church or state. (See Dan. viii. 10. Rev. i. 20. vi. 13. viii. 12. ix. 1.)

I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.] I will sit in the temple of God, which was situate upon Mount Moriah, and on the north side of Jerusalem. (See Psal. xlviii. 2. Ezek. xl. 2.) These expressions, as they allude to the rebellion of Satan, who affected to be equal with God; so they contain in them an exact description of antichrist, who is represented, by St. Paul, as *exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, as sitting in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God,* 2 Thess. ii. 4. (See likewise Dan. xi. 36.)

Ver. 15. *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell.*] To the lowest degree of misery and destruction. (Compare Matt. xi. 23.)

Ver. 16. *They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee.*] As not knowing thee at first sight, by reason of the great alteration of thy condition.

Ver. 17. *That opened not the house of his prisoners.*] The marginal reading expresses the sense better, *That did not let his prisoners loose homewards:* that is, did not restore them to their own country, as Cyrus did afterward to the Jews, but kept them in perpetual slavery. (See Jer. l. 33.)

Ver. 18. *Every one in his own house.*] In his own sepulchre: so the grave is called the *house of eternity,* or the *long home,* as our translation very well expresses it, Eccles. xii. 5.

Ver. 19. *But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain.*] Thou art not allowed the honour of decent burial. (See the following verse, and Jer. xxxvi. 30.) Thou art reputed no better than a dead *branch,* that is fit for nothing but to rot upon the ground: or like the *raiment* of those that are *slain,* which is so filthy, that nobody cares to touch it. The touching the clothes of any person slain, did contract uncleanness by the law, (Numb. xix. 6.) This verse may fitly be applied to Belshazzar, the last king of the Babylonian race, who being slain in a sudden revolution, his body might probably be neglected for some time, and suffered to lie above ground, and afterward be buried without any solemnity, but thrown into a pit in the very clothes in which he was slain, as common soldiers are buried in the field after an engagement.

Ver. 21. *Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers.*] Belshazzar being slain, and the monarchy translated to the Medes and Persians, (Dan. v. 30, 31.) it is not likely that any related to the family of the former monarchs were suffered to survive.

That they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.] It was the ambition of the great monarchs of those times to build new cities, and call them by their own names, thereby to perpetuate their memory. Hence the cities took their rise, which were called by the names of Seleucia, Ptolemais, Alexandria, &c. Some render the latter part of the verse, *Nor fill the face of the world with enemies,* such as should continue a succession of war and bloodshed, and disturb the peace and quiet of mankind.

Ver. 22. *I will cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew.*] See the note on ver. 21.

[*And son and nephew.*] Or rather *son and grandson:* the word *neked* is translated *son's son,* or *grandson,* Gen. xxi. 23. so it should be translated here, and Job xviii. 19. as Dr. Prideaux observes, ad an. A. C. 539. This prophecy was fulfilled in the death of Belshazzar, who was grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, and the last of that family. See the note upon Jer. xxvii. 7.]

Ver. 23. *I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water.*] Compare xiii. 21, 22. xxxiv. 11. Babylon stood in a low, marshy ground, and the prophet threatens that it shall be as entirely destroyed, as if it were sunk into the bottom of a great lake or pool. (See Jer. li. 64.) This agrees with what is said xiii. 19. that it shall be *as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,* which were swallowed up in a lake of fire and brimstone. Several learned men are of opinion that the same sort of punishment is threatened to mystical Babylon, Rev. xviii. 21. which the prophet hath here all along in his eye.

And I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.] I will make a clear riddance of all its wealth and substance. (See the like expressions, 2 Kings xxi. 13.)

Ver. 25. *That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot.*] Some interpreters understand this verse of Sennacherib, whose army was destroyed in its march towards Jerusalem upon the mountains of Judea; (see the note upon lxv. 9.) and they think that the prophet mentions this as an earnest of that vengeance which is here denounced against the Babylonian monarchy, which was all one with the Assyrian, and is called by that name, even after the seat of that empire was removed to Babylon. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 29. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.) But to make this part of the verse agree better with what follows, *Then shall the yoke depart from thy neck,* &c. which words imply the final deliverance of God's people; I am apt to think that by the Assyrian, may be meant some remarkable enemies of God's church, (see note on xi. 14. xxxii. 16.) and particularly those which are expressed by Gog and Magog, Ezek. xxxviii. who, as the prophet there tells us, (ver. 17.) were under several names *spoken of by the prophets of Israel:* and it is particularly said of them, that they shall *fall upon the mountains of Israel;* (Ezek. xxxix. 4.) the same expression that is used here. And if we understand the words thus, it properly follows, as a conclusion from the premises, in the next verse.

Ver. 26. *This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth,* &c.] But they who interpret this verse of the Babylonian empire, suppose the prophet speaks of it as if it were a universal monarchy, and comprehended in a manner all the known world: as the Roman empire was,

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in aftertimes, styled by the name of *the world.* (See Luke ii. 1.)

Ver. 28. *In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.*] Here begins a new prophecy against the Philistines, called a *burden*, as that against Babylon, (xiii. 1.) They rejoiced upon the death of Ahaz, which gave occasion to this prophecy against them.

Ver. 29. *Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina.*] All the tribes or clans of the Philistines, who had five lords or heads over them. (See Josh. xiii. 3. 1 Sam. vi. 6.)

Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken.] Because Ahaz is dead, the son of Uzziah thy deadly enemy. (See 2 Chron. xxvi. 6.) Children are commonly represented by rods or shoots, that grow out of the root of a tree. (See xi. 1.)

For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.] As much as a cockatrice, or a fiery flying serpent, is more to be dreaded than a common viper; so much more reason have you to fear Hezekiah, than his grandfather Uzziah, because the grandson will make an entire conquest of your country. (See 2 Kings xviii. 8.) A *flying serpent* is what the Latins call *serpens jaculus*, who darts himself against any creature he meets: and they are called *fiery*, because they cause an inflammation where they sting. (See xxx. 6.)

Ver. 30. *And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety.*] The same Hezekiah shall be a mild and gracious governor to his own subjects; he shall take care of them as a shepherd does of his flock, and relieve those who were oppressed by the Philistines in his father's time. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.) The *first-born of the poor* denotes those who are remarkably such, as the *first-born of death* (Job xviii. 13.) signifies some unusual disease, and such as is distinguished from the common ways of dying.

Ver. 31. *For there shall come from the north a smoke.*] Judea lay northward of the Philistines, from whence this judgment is threatened. Smoke and fire are emblems of God's wrath, and of great calamities. (See Gen. xv. 17. Psal. xviii. 8.)

And none shall be alone in his appointed time.] The Jews shall all go out as one man against the Philistines, at the time appointed by their leaders.

Ver. 32. *What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.*] It was usual for neighbouring nations, who were friends and allies, to send ambassadors, and congratulate each other's success. (See 2 Sam. viii. 10. 2 Kings xx. 12.) And when this good success against the Philistines shall be known abroad, it will be a proper answer to give to such ambassadors, that God is the founder of the Jewish kingdom, and Zion, the place of his residence, is under his peculiar protection, where all humble and devout persons shall find a safe retreat: and this promise will be more fully verified in the Christian church. (See the notes upon xi. 4. xxvi. 6.)

CHAP. XV.

ARGUMENT.

It is not certain when this prophecy, contained in this and the following chapter, was fulfilled; only thus far, that it was brought to pass three years after the publishing of it. (See xvi. 14.) Archbishop Usher, in his Annals of the Old Testament, ad A. M. 3280. supposes it fulfilled by Shalmaneser, two years before the captivity of the ten tribes; but the fourth and fifth verses of the sixteenth chapter, speak of the people of Judea as lately delivered from some very grievous calamity, wherein the Moabites afforded them no assistance; which makes it probable, that this judgment fell upon them some time after Sennacherib's invasion. Without question, this prophecy relates to a different time from that of Jeremiah, chap. xlviii.

Ver. 1. *BECAUSE in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence* [*or cut off*, as the margin reads]; *because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste*, &c.] Ar and Kir are originally appellatives, and signify a city or a fortified place: there are two cities called by the name of Kir in Scripture; this here mentioned belonging to Moab, the other a city in Media, spoken of 2 Kings xvi. 9. and Amos i. 5.

Ver. 2. *He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep.*] *He*, that is, the people of Moab, are gone up to Bajith; which word may be taken for an appellative, and signify the house or temple of an idol, which the Moabites worshipped: or it may signify the place where that temple stood, called Beth-baal-meon, Josh. xiii. 17.

On all heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.] These were tokens of great mourning, and frequently used in the funeral obsequies of the gentiles, and upon that account forbidden by the Jewish law: (see Lev. xix. 27, 28. xxi. 5. Deut. xiv. 1.) but seem to have been lawfully practised upon other sorrowful occasions. (See Ezra ix. 3. Job i. 20. Isa. xxii. 12. Jer. vii. 29. Micah i. 16.)

Ver. 3. *On the tops of their houses every one shall howl.*] It was the custom of those countries to build their houses with flat roofs; (see Deut. xxii. 8.) thither they retired to pay their idolatrous worship, and for that purpose dedicated altars on the tops of their houses to the host of heaven. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Jer. xix. 13. Zeph. i. 5.) Or they might go up to their house-tops to discover the motions of the enemy, or to look out for assistance. (Compare xxii. 1.)

Ver. 4. *Their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz.*] A frontier-town of Moab. (See Numb. xxi. 23.)

The armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out.] Even the soldiers shall lose their courage, and cry out like women.

Ver. 5. *My heart shall cry out for Moab.*] This seems to be spoken in the person of the Moabites, (compare xvi. 7. xxi. 3. Jer. xlviii. 31. 36.) or in order to excite them to bewail their own misfortunes, according to that rule of the critic, *si vis me flere, dolendum est Primum ipsi tibi.* (Horat. in Art. Poet.) If we understand the prophet as speaking in his own person, it implies that the calamities of Moab are so great, as to extort pity even from an enemy. It may be farther observed, that God's judgments, as they were represented to the prophets, did sometimes raise such ideas of terror in them, as to affect them in an extraordinary manner. (See Jer. xxiii. 9. Dan. vii. 28. Habak. iii. 16.)

His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, and an heifer of three years old.] The sense would run clearer, if, instead of

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adding the words *shall flee*, as our translation does, the text were supplied from the former part of the verse thus, *His fugitives* shall cry out *unto Zoar*, as *an heifer*, &c. (Compare Jer. xlviii. 34.) An heifer is observed to be more noisy than a bullock. The particle [*as*] is frequently understood. (See the note upon xxi. 8.)

Ver. 6. *For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away*, &c.] Nimrim was noted for good pasture, and meadows well watered; (see Numb. xxxii. 3. 36.) which shall now be quite trod down and destroyed, as if it had been burnt up in a dry season.

Ver. 7. *That which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.*] Or, *to the valley of the Arabians*, as our margin reads it, whither the Assyrians, their enemies, carried all the booty they took from the Moabites, it being the direct way from Moab to Assyria, as St. Jerome upon the place informs us.

Ver. 8. *The howling thereof unto Beer-Elim.*] Grotius guessed this place to be the same which is called *Beer*, Numb. xxi. 16. and that it had the title of *Elim* added to it, from the prince's digging a well there, (ver. 18.)

Ver. 9. *For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood.*] *Dimon* is the same with *Dibon*, ver. 2. It hath its etymology from the Hebrew *dam*, which signifies *blood*, and to which the prophet here alludes.

For I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth, &c.] I will bring more and more calamities; and they that flee to escape the present evils shall fall into worse disasters, as if a man that fled from his enemy should meet with a lion to devour him. (Compare Jer. xlviii. 44. Amos v. 19.)

CHAP. XVI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter is a continuation of God's judgments against Moab.

Ver. 1. *SEND ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness.*] The Moabites were subdued by David, and became his tributaries; (2 Sam. viii. 5.) and part of the tribute which they paid was a hundred thousand lambs, (2 Kings iii. 5.) which it is likely had been discontinued for some time: this the prophet exhorts them to renew, as a just acknowledgment to the king of Judah, the heir of David's family: the latter part of the words might be better translated, *from Sela in the wilderness*, (see 2 Kings xiv. 7.) The wilderness of Moab is mentioned again at the eighth verse of this chapter.

Ver. 2. *For it shall be, that as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.*] Some render it thus: *Or else it shall be*, &c. If ye do not comply with the advice I have given you, (ver. 1.) ye shall be turned out of your habitations, and your daughters shall wander about in a helpless condition, as young birds drove out of their nest, and unable to shift for themselves.

Ver. 3. *Take counsel, execute judgment.*] The prophet speaks by way of advice, and exhorts the Moabites to shew that kindness to their brethren the Jews in the time of their distress, as in reason and justice they ought to do; but withal doth covertly upbraid them with the neglect of it: Moab and Edom, though they were a people nearly related to the Jews, yet laid hold of all opportunities to aggravate their miseries, and rejoiced at their calamities, for which they are severely threatened with judgments by the prophets. (See Jer. xlviii. 27. Obad. ver. 10, &c. Amos i. 11. Zeph. ii. 8.)

Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.] The prophet compares the calamities of the Jews, which they had lately endured, probably under Sennacherib's invasion, to the scorching heat of the sun, and puts the Moabites in mind, that they ought to have been a refuge to them during this distress. (See the like expressions, iv. 6. xxv. 4.)

Ver. 4. *For the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.*] This shews the foregoing expressions to be ironical, as if the prophet had said, To have shewed such kindness to us in the time of our distress, would have been thankfully accepted, as a seasonable instance of humanity and brotherly love; but now, thanks be to God, we have no farther need of your assistance, for that storm is quickly blown over, and it comes to your turn to feel God's afflicting hand.

Ver. 5. *And in mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David*, &c.] Now Hezekiah's throne and kingdom are established, who shall govern his people with an equal mixture of justice and mercy; and therein prefigure the Messias, in whom all the promises made to the house of David shall be finally accomplished. The *tabernacle of David* may allude to his having been a shepherd, and dwelling in tents, before he was advanced to a kingdom; but both here and Amos ix. 11. (the only places where the phrase is used) it mystically denotes the church, which is elsewhere called *God's tabernacle*, as being the place of his especial presence, as the tabernacle of old was in the wilderness. (Compare Lev. xxvi. 11. with Rev. xxi. 3.)

Ver. 6. *But his lies shall not be so.*] Or rather, *His strength is not so*: "Indignatio ejus plus quam fortitudo ejus," saith the Vulgar Latin, joining the words to the former part of the verse, *His wrath is greater than his strength*; or his power does not answer his vain boasts; which translation agrees very well with the Hebrew, and makes the sense run plain and easy.

Ver. 7. *Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab.*] Or, *to Moab:* they shall lament over one another, in this general calamity.

For the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn.] Kir-hareseth was one of the strongest cities of Moab; (see 2 Kings iii. 25.) whose foundations or mighty men, as some understand it, were ruined and destroyed. The same place is called Kir-haresh, at the eleventh verse.

Ver. 8. *For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof; they are come even to Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness*, &c.] The prophet describes the destruction of a fruitful country of Moab: (see Josh. xiii. 17—19.) that was noted for plenty of vineyards: and pursuing the metaphor, he saith, That the *lords of the nations*, that is, the Assyrians, have *broken down the principal plants*; *i. e.* have ruined the principal inhabitants, and have carried them away, or forced them to leave their

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own country; and *pass over the sea, i. e.* the river of Jazer, (a stream of the river Arnon, which is the border of Moab, Numb. xxi. 13.) and made them *wander through the wilderness of Moab;* concerning which, see Deut. ii. 8. This sense of the verse agrees best with Jer. xlviii. 32. a place which alludes to this, and borrows some expressions from it. At the latter end of the verse, instead of *her branches are stretched out,* the margin reads, *her branches are plucked up,* which is a better translation.

Ver. 9. *Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer, the vine of Sibmah.*] Or, *With weeping I will bewail Jazer* [and] *the vine of Sibmah. I will bewail Jazer,* that is, those that are carried away to Jazer, or forced to fly thither.

Ver. 10. *And gladness shall be taken away out of the plentiful field,* &c.] See note on ix. 3.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab.*] See note on xv. 5.

Ver. 12. *And it shall come to pass, that when it is seen that Moab is weary of the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray,* &c.] We read Numb. xxiii. 13. 27. that Balak king of Moab went from one place to another to offer sacrifice with Balaam, thinking his devotions might be more prevalent at one place than another. The same thing is spoken of here, that when the Moabites find their prayers upon the high places ineffectual, (see xv. 2.) they will then try what success they may have when offered in the sanctuary or temple of their god Chemosh, who was the tutelar idol of their nation. The word *sanctuary* is applied to idolatrous temples, Amos vii. 9. 13.

Ver. 13. *This is the word the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.*] Or rather, *A good while ago,* for so the Hebrew *meaz* signifies. (See note on xliv. 8.) This judgment, saith the prophet, was denounced against Moab in former times, particularly by Amos, (ii. 1, &c.) and is now confirmed by this vision, and the particular time specified when it should be accomplished in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *Within three years, as the years of a hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned.*] Within that certain and determinate time precisely fixed; see the like expression xxi. 16. and the note upon that place: and compare Job vii. 1. Some servants were bond-slaves during their lives; but hired servants were discharged precisely at the time agreed between them and their master, and they were usually hired for three years. (See Deut. xv. 18.)

CHAP. XVII.

ARGUMENT.

In this chapter to the twelfth verse, the prophet renews his threatenings against Syria and Israel, whose destruction he had foretold in the seventh and eighth chapters. The three last verses are a distinct prophecy, which seems to relate to the formidable invasion of the Assyrians upon Judea, and their sudden overthrow.

Ver. 1. *DAMASCUS is taken away from being a city.*] See notes on vii. 16. viii. 4. This city was rebuilt afterward, and prophesied against by Jeremiah, xlix. 23. and Zechariah, ix. 1.

Ver. 2. *The cities of Aroer are forsaken.*] Grotius supposes this Aroer to have been a tract of ground in Syria, not that Aroer mentioned Deut. ii. 26. which was in the confines of Moab and Ammon, and part of the possession of the Reubenites and Gadites. Others suppose this very country to have been taken away from those tribes by the Syrians, and annexed to their own dominions.

They shall be for flocks to lie down in, and none shall make them afraid.] Where they may lie securely, and nobody disturb them. It is a proverbial expression for utter destruction to say, *That grass grows where such a town stood.* (See note on vii. 25.)

Ver. 3. *The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus.*] As the two kingdoms of Syria and Israel were confederates against Judah, so they were threatened with one common destruction. (See vii. 1. 16. viii. 4.) Of the use of the word Ephraim, see note on vii. 2.

They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel.] Who were in a declining condition for several years before. (See 2 Kings xv. 29.)

Ver. 4. *The glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.*] Jacob is the same with Israel in the foregoing verse, and both denote the ten tribes, as ix. 8. God's judgments are sometimes expressed by *leanness,* because, like a consumption, they waste the strength. (See x. 16. xxiv. 16. Psal. cvi. 16.)

Ver. 5. *And it shall be as when the harvest-man gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm.*] The word *harvest* is sometimes metaphorically used to signify an entire destruction, because the harvest makes a clear riddance, and leaves the fields empty and bare. (See Jer. li. 33. Hos. vi. 11.)

In the valley of Rephaim.] The same words are translated *the valley of giants,* Josh. xv. 8. xviii. 6. It was a fruitful valley that lay near Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive-tree,* &c.] The former verse was an illustration of Israel's destruction from the ridding of fields in the corn-harvest: in this the metaphor is taken from the vintage, and the gathering in of the summer-fruits, and implies that the desolation shall not be so entire but that a few should be left, like the gleanings of a vine or an olive-tree after the main crop is gathered. (Compare xxiv. 13.) Accordingly we find that some of the ancient inhabitants of the ten tribes were left after Shalmaneser's captivity, (see 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 11.) and even after the second captivity of that people in the time of Esar-haddon. (See 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.)

Ver. 7. *In that day shall a man look to his Maker,* &c.] God's judgments upon the kingdom of Israel shall have that effect, as to turn many of those that remain from their idolatrous worship to serve the true God. (See 2 Chron. xxx. 11. 18.)

Ver. 8. *Neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images.*] The groves being here called the work of men's hands, the word seems to be taken for an idol placed in a grove, as it is used 2 Kings xxi. 7. compared with xxiii. 6. The images here mentioned are translated *sun-images* in the margin, and are supposed to be such as were erected in honour of the sun. (See Ezek. vi. 4. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.)

Ver. 9. *In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch.*] The cities belonging

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to the ten tribes shall stand solitary and destitute of inhabitants, all the country about them being destroyed.

Which they left because of the children of Israel.] The sense is here imperfect: most expositors understand the words of the Assyrians, that they left some cities with a few inhabitants in the kingdom of Israel, that a remnant of that people might be preserved. (See ver. 6.) But the copy which the Septuagint followed, instead of the Hebrew words *hachoresh vehaamir*, i. e. *bough and uppermost branch*, read *Hachivi Vehaemori*, i. e. *the Hivites and Amorites:* for they translate the verse thus, *The cities shall be forsaken, as when the Hivites and the Amorites forsook them, because of the children of Israel.* Which reading gives a plain and full sense to the text. We justly esteem the present Hebrew text as a very correct copy; but we need not ascribe such a degree of infallibility to it, as to reject a better reading, when it is suggested by the ancient versions. For such a concession does no more weaken the authority of the Old Testament, than the various readings of the Greek copies invalidate that of the New.

Ver. 10. *Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips.*] Or rather *with foreign slips*, such as for their rarity are fetched from foreign parts.

Ver. 11. *In the day shalt thou make thy plants to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish*, &c.] The sense depends upon the former verse, and both together import thus much; Because thou hast forsaken the true God, to follow idols, nothing shall thrive with thee: although, like an industrious gardener, thou procurest the choicest plants, and takest the greatest care to make them grow, watering and trimming at all seasons of the day, yet when thou expectest to reap the fruit of thy labours (so our margin very fitly translates *jom nachalah*, the *day of inheritance*, or of enjoying what we have taken pains for), thou shalt find nothing but loss and disappointment. The Hebrew language wants the potential mood, which is often supplied by the future tense, as it seems to be here: so the words might be rendered more plainly, thus, *Thou mayest plant pleasant plants, and mayest set it with foreign slips, in the day thou mayest make thy plant to grow, and in the morning thou mayest make thy seed to flourish; but*, &c. When the Hebrews would signify doing a thing speedily with care and diligence, they often express it by doing it *in the morning*. See l. 4. Psal. xlvi. 5. where our translation reads, *God shall help her*, and that *right early:* but it is in the Hebrew, *when the morning appeareth.*

Ver. 12. *Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas.*] As multitudes are compared to waters, (see Rev. xvii. 15.) so great armies are resembled to inundations, because they overrun all that comes in their way, and carry every thing before them. (See note on viii. 7.)

Ver. 13. *As the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.*] The Jews used to thrash their corn upon hills, and places exposed to the wind, (see xli. 14. 2 Chron. iii. 1.) which dispersed the chaff, and blew it away. The word *galgal*, which our text translates *rolling thing*, is better rendered *thistle-down* in the margin; the word signifies any straws or motes, which are driven about with the wind. Compare Psal. lxxxiii. 13. where our English reads, *make them like a wheel;* but it should be translated, *make them like thistle-down:* for the word both there and here is joined with *stubble*, as an equivalent expression.

Ver. 14. *Behold at even-tide trouble; and in the morning he is not.*] This fitly represents the condition of Sennacherib's army, which caused great consternation over night, but were all destroyed before next morning. (See 2 Kings xix. 35.)

CHAP. XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Ethiopia and Egypt were the Jews' confederates when they were invaded by Sennacherib. (See xx. 5. 2 Kings xviii. 21. compared with 2 Kings xix. 9.) But it is a great question among learned men, whether by Ethiopia, called *Chush* in the Hebrew, be meant Arabia, lying eastward of Egypt, and therefore joined with Seba, xliii. 3. or Ethiopia, properly so called, lying westward of it: if we understand it of the latter, as Huetius does, (Comment. in Origen. p. 43. 50.) we must then understand the forementioned text, (2 Kings xix. 9.) of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, (called *Tarkon*, in Strabo, lib. i. xv.) coming to fight against Sennacherib, and sending forces to assist the Egyptians and the Jews: and this sense Archbishop Usher follows in his Annals of the Old Testament, ad A. M. 3294. But in which sense soever we take the word *Chush*, this prophecy relates to Egypt, in conjunction with Ethiopia, or Arabia; and the prophet shews, that although the designs of the Jews' allies in their favour should prove abortive, yet God will defend his own dwelling-place without their assistance. [Ethiopia and Egypt were united into one kingdom, by Sabacon, the king of Ethiopia, called So, 2 Kings xvii. 4. who slew Bocchoris, and conquered Egypt in the last year of king Ahaz. See Usher's Annals, ad A. M. 3277.]

Ver. 1. *WOE to the land shadowing with wings.*] It is generally agreed that this is a description of Egypt: some understand the words of their ships, with spreading sails like wings; others of the protection she boasted that she could give to her allies: but the Hebrew, *tsiltsel*, which our English renders *shadowing*, does properly signify a sort of timbrel, called in Latin *sistrum*, which was an instrument of music peculiar to the Egyptians in their sacrifices to Isis; and the words, *tsiltsel kenaphim*, are interpreted *a winged cymbal* by Huetius, (Demonstr. Evang. prop. iv. cap. 4. n. 10.) which he tells us is an exact description of the *sistrum*, and supposes the expression to be a periphrasis of Egypt, called here *the land* famous *for its winged cymbals.* The ingenious Mr. Reeves, in his notes upon Minucius Felix, cap. 21. expounds the phrase, *shadowing with wings*, of a swallow that used to be pictured over the statue of Isis with expanded wings. Le Moyne, in his Varia Sacra, (par. ii. p. 4.) thinks, that by the word *kenaphim*, *wings*, the prophet denotes the idol which the Egyptians called *Kneph*, who was represented with wings, and an egg coming out of his mouth, to signify the creation of the world, by the word and decree of God; the world itself being represented by Isis: this *Kneph* is mentioned by Plutarch, in his book de Iside et Osride, and is called Κνῦφις, by Strabo, lib. xvii.

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Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.] Or rather, *Which borders upon the rivers of Ethiopia;* the Hebrew signifies indifferently either *cis* or *trans*, the hither, or farther side of a river.

Ver. 2. *That sendeth ambassadors by sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters.*] To encourage their confederates with promises of assistance. But the Hebrew *tsirim*, which our English renders *ambassadors*, does likewise signify *idols*, and so it is translated xlv. 16. Following this sense, Bochart and Le Moyne understand the words of the image of Isis, which the Egyptians used to carry from place to place by water, in a sort of paper vessel or ship: Lucan, speaking of their little boats, saith, *Conseritur bibula Memphitis cymba papyro*, (lib. iv.)

Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, &c.] These words may be understood of the ambassadors, which the Ethiopians, in conjunction with the Egyptians, sent to the Assyrians, by way of bidding them defiance; and then by a land *scattered and peeled*, must be understood Assyria, which, though formerly *terrible* to all its neighbours, yet now was distracted with foreign wars, and exhausted of its soldiers: if we follow this sense, the latter part of the verse may most properly be rendered as our margin reads it, *whose land the rivers despise;* that is, the Ethiopians, and those that dwell among the rivers thereabout, are not afraid of the Assyrian power. This sense our translators prefer, and understand *tsirim, ambassadors,* and *melachim, messengers,* as meant of the same persons, and likewise supply the word, *saying*, to make the following sentence the substance of what the ambassadors were supposed to speak.

But others think that the words are a message from God, to denounce judgment against the Ethiopians, who are called *a people terrible from their beginning*, because they had invaded Judea several times with formidable armies: (see 2 Chron. xii. 3. xiv. 9.) and that the purport of the words is to acquaint them, that they should be *scattered and peeled, meted out and trodden down:* that the forces of the Assyrian, compared to an overflowing river, (see xvii. 12.) should overrun and destroy them; which was fulfilled, as appears from xx. 4. This sense I prefer, because it agrees better with the seventh verse, where the same words are repeated; and with Ezek. xxx. 9. where God saith, *Messengers shall go from me in ships, to make the careless Ethiopians afraid;* which place plainly alludes to these words of Isaiah.

Ver. 3. *All ye inhabitants of the world, see ye, when he lifted up an ensign upon the mountains,* &c.] To set up a banner, and to blow a trumpet, are usual signals of war: the prophet saith here, that God himself will remarkably espouse the cause of his people, and exhorts all people to take notice of his proceedings.

Ver. 4. *I will take my rest, and consider in my dwelling-place.*] Or, *I will have a regard for my set dwelling* (as the margin reads), and defend it, though without using any visible means, or the outward assistance of any of my people's confederates, such as the Ethiopians were, which is meant by God's *taking his rest; i. e.* not going out with their armies, according to the former interpretation of the words.

Like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.] Or, *Like a clear heat after rain,* as the margin reads; the vicissitude of rain and sunshine is very agreeable, and contributes that warmth and moisture which make all vegetables grow and flourish: (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.) such refreshment will God afford his people in their calamities, and not unlike that which a dripping cloud gives when it falls in a soft dew, and abates the burning heat of the harvest-time. (See xxv. 5. xxxii. 2.)

Ver. 5. *For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect* [or while the bud is growing to maturity], *and the sour grape is ripening in the flower.*] Before the designs of the Ethiopians, and their confederates the Egyptians, could come to maturity, they should prove abortive, just as if one should cut off the bearing branches of a vine, before the grapes are fit to be gathered. The word *harvest* is applied to the time of gathering in of the summer-fruits, as well as of corn. (See xvi. 9. xvii. 11.)

Ver. 6. *They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth,* &c.] Their armies shall become a prey unto the wild beasts and the birds of prey: (compare Ezek. xxxix. 17.) as if a garden or vineyard should be destroyed, and laid open to all the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, to come and feed there all the year round. (Compare Ezek. xxxi. 13.)

Ver. 7. *In that time.*] There is no necessity of supposing this to be meant of the same time specified in the foregoing part of the chapter, as hath been shewed in the note upon iv. 2.

Shall the present [or a present] *be brought to the Lord of hosts,* &c.] Bringing of presents was a solemn expression of that homage which is due from subjects or tributaries to their princes. (See 2 Sam. viii. 2. Psal. lxxii. 10.) So here it implies, that the Ethiopians shall make their due acknowledgments to God as their sovereign, which is consonant to other prophecies concerning them. (See Psal. lxviii. 31. Zeph. iii. 10.) This we may suppose to have been partly verified at the destruction of Sennacherib, the common enemy to them and the Jews, upon which remarkable turn of affairs, many of the neighbouring nations congratulated Hezekiah's victory, and magnified the power of God which so evidently interposed for his deliverance. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.) But the words are chiefly to be understood of the calling of those nations to the gospel. The conversion of the gentiles is elsewhere expressed, by their bringing offerings to God's temple or altar, because that was the most solemn part of religious worship that was practised among the Jews. (See lx. 6. 9. Psal. lxvii. 29. Micah iv. 13.) We may observe, that several other prophecies which threaten destruction to nations or cities, conclude with a gracious promise, that God will remember them in due time, and acknowledge them for his people. (See xix. 18, &c. xxiii. 18. Jer. xlviii. 47. xlix. 39.)

CHAP. XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Egyptians were the Jews' principal confederates, at the time of Sennacherib's invasion: (see 2 Kings xviii. 21, &c.) who are often reproved by this prophet for their vain confidence in Egypt, as that which would fail and disappoint them. (See xx. 5, 6. xxx. 2, &c. xxxi. 1, &c.) Accordingly, as the prophet foretells the conquest of Egypt by Sennacherib, (chap. xx.) who overran Egypt

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and Ethiopia, the Jews' confederates, before he besieged Jerusalem; so this chapter seems to be a general prophecy against Egypt, denouncing the several calamities it should suffer from the time of Sennacherib's invasion, till the entire change of affairs it should undergo under the government of the twelve tyrants, which at last ended in the sole government of Psammitichus. Scaliger understands this prophecy of Sabacon, who slew Bocchoris, and made himself king of Egypt, in the last year of Ahaz's reign. (Can. Isagog. p. 318.) This opinion seems to me not to agree very well with ver. 17. Some explain the chapter of Sennacherib's, Tirhaka's, or Tarachus's conquest of Egypt.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud.*] God's visible appearance is described by his *riding upon the wings of the wind,* (Psal. xviii. 10. civ. 3.) and *his riding upon the heavens,* (Deut. xxxiii. 16. Psal. lxviii. 4.) which expressions allude to the cloud of glory in which the Schechinah used to appear.

And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.] To be *moved,* either signifies that the evil spirits which are worshipped in their idols, shall be under a great consternation, when God brings his judgments upon them and their worshippers: or else it may be meant of their being removed and carried captive, as Jeremy afterward foretold, (xliii. 12.) When God executes his judgments upon a heathen nation, he is said to punish the idols of that people: so particularly it is said of Egypt, Exod. xii. 12. and of Babylon, Isa. xxi. 9. xlvi. 1. Jer. l. 2. li. 44.

Ver. 2. *They shall fight every one against his brother—city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.*] One province against another; so the Septuagint very properly render it, Νομὸς ἐπὶ νομόν: the several divisions of that country being called *nomi;* and *tribes* here, (ver. 13.) This was fulfilled after their king Sethon's death, when the country was divided into twelve petty governments, and Psammitichus, ruler of one of these, at last subdued all the rest. (See note on ver. 4.)

Ver. 3. *And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the council thereof.*] Both the courage and the wisdom of the Egyptians shall fail them in the time of their greatest need. (See ver. 11, 12, &c.) The wisdom of Egypt was famous in those times all the world over: (see 1 Kings iv. 40. Acts vii. 22.) and from thence the Greeks, in aftertimes, derived their knowledge.

And they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, &c.] As it was usual for idolaters to do in their distress; (see xlvii. 12.) and the Jews themselves sometimes did in imitation of the ill customs of their neighbours. (See viii. 19.)

Ver. 4. *And the Egyptians will I give into the hand of a cruel lord,* &c.] This most interpreters understand of Psammitichus. (See note on ver. 2.)

Ver. 5. *And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.*] Tremellius shews out of Herodotus that this was literally fulfilled under the government of the twelve petty tyrants who ruled Egypt after Sethon. But the expression may the more probably be metaphorical, and denote the decay of the Egyptian strength, by metaphors taken from the decrease of the river Nile; upon the overflowing of which river all the plenty and prosperity of Egypt depended. Thus the king of Egypt is described, Ezek. xxix. 3. as *a dragon (i. e.* a whale, or crocodile) *lying in the midst of many waters,* and boasting of his strength, by saying, *My river is my own,* &c. Scaliger understands it of a great drought which occasioned a dearth, by the failing of the inundation of the Nile. (Can. Isagog. p. 318.)

Ver. 6. *And the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up.*] *Jesré Matzor,* in the Hebrew: the same expression we meet with again, xxxvii. 25. which is there translated, the *rivers of besieged places:* such as were of use to defend cities against a siege. But Bochart (Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 24.) translates it the *rivers of Egypt,* and shews that the word *Matzor* denotes Egypt sometimes, and may be fitly translated so in both these places of Isaiah, and likewise in Micah vii. 12. which place our translation renders very obscurely, thus, *In that day he shall come unto thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even unto the river:* but supposing *Matzor* to signify *Egypt,* the word runs plainly thus, *They shall come unto thee from Assyria to the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even to the river* [Euphrates], which was the boundary of Assyria: and the sense is, that the Jews shall return from their several dispersions whither they were scattered; which is often expressed in the prophets by their return from Assyria and Egypt, as hath been observed in the notes upon xi. 15, 16.

Ver. 7. *And the paper-reeds—by the mouth of the brook—shall wither.*] Paper was an invention of the Egyptians, and was first made of a reed that grew upon the banks of the Nile, which is therefore thus described by Ovid, (Metamorph. i.)

"——— Papyriferi septemflua flumina Nili."

Accordingly the paper-reeds are said here to grow by the mouth of the brooks, that is, by the shore, or side of the brooks; expressed elsewhere by the *lip of the river,* (Gen. xli. 3. Exod. ii. 3.) speaking of the Nile.

Ver. 8. *The fishers also shall mourn,* &c.] The same metaphor is still continued, to signify, that all sort of trade and business shall cease, by reason of the great commotions which distract the kingdom.

Ver. 9. *Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net-work, shall be confounded.*] Fine flax, and linen made out of it, was a principal commodity of Egypt: (see 1 Kings x. 28. Prov. vii. 16. Ezek. xxvii. 7.) and was the habit of their priests and other great men, both in Egypt and in other countries. (See Gen. xli. 42. Esth. viii. 15. Dan. x. 5. Luke xvi. 19.) The *net-works* which follow, or *white-works* as the margin reads, seem to have been fine weaved works made of the same materials.

Ver. 11. *Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish.*] See the following verses. Zoan or Tanis was one of the ancientest cities in Egypt; (see Numb. xiii. 22.) and the metropolis of the kingdom in Moses's time. (See Psal. lxxviii. 43.) Pharaoh was a name common to all the Egyptian kings.

How say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?] It was in vain that the court-flatterers extolled their king for his extraordinary abilities, which were derived to him by a succession of many generations; which yet should not fail in Sethon or Sevecus,

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who should be the last king of his family: Egypt was one of the ancientest kingdoms in the world, and pretended that the Chaldeans themselves were derived from thence, as Diodorus Siculus affirms, (lib. ii.) though these vied antiquity with the former: but the Egyptians were not content with such a pretence to antiquity, as might be made good by substantial proofs, but would needs have it, that the first men in the world arose out of the mud and slime of the river Nile; as may be seen in the same author. (Hist. lib. ii. cap. 2.)

[*The son of ancient kings.*] The kings of Egypt derived their royal dignity from Misraim, the son of Ham; upon which account Egypt is called *the land of Ham,* Psal. lxxviii. 51. cv. 23. cvi. 22.]

Ver. 12. *Where are thy wise men? And let them tell thee now,* &c.] The wise men of Egypt and the magicians are joined together, Gen. xli. 8. and the prophet tells them here, that with all their skill in the arts of divination they could not foresee the evils impending over their country, nor tell how to prevent them. (Compare xlvii. 13.)

Ver. 13. *The princes of Noph are deceived.*] Noph is better known by the name of Memphis; it is called Moph, Hos. ix. 16. which comes very near that name.

They that are the stay of the tribes thereof.] The governors of the several provinces, or *nomi.* (See before on ver. 2.)

Ver. 14. *They have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit.*] God's judgments are often called the *cup of his wrath:* (see particularly Jer. xxv. 16, 17.) because they deprive men not only of their strength, but even of that common prudence and presence of mind, which is requisite for the due management of their affairs; according to that observation, *Quos Jupiter perdere vult, dementat.*

Ver. 15. *Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.*] All orders and degrees of men shall fail in the discharge of their duty, from the highest to the lowest. (Compare ix. 14.)

Ver. 16. *In that day shall Egypt be like women,* &c.] When God intends the destruction of any people, he commonly takes from them their strength and courage, so that a *thousand of them shall flee at the rebuke of one,* as our prophet speaks, xxx. 17. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 25. Jer. l. 37. Nahum iii. 13.) This is what the heathens expressed by a *panic terror;* but Isaiah more properly calls it here, *the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts,* God's holding his rod over a people, and still threatening them with severer judgments. (Compare x. 32. xi. 15.)

Ver. 17. *And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt.*] Egypt was subdued by Sennacherib before he besieged Jerusalem, as may be gathered from xx. 5, 6. But before that, we read of Sennacherib's invading Judea, and taking all its fenced cities, (2 Kings xviii. 13.) which is placed by Archbishop Usher three years before his besieging Jerusalem. It is this first invasion the prophet here probably alludes to, and saith, that the report of it caused great terror in Egypt, being neighbours and allies to the Jews.

Ver. 18. *In that day.*] There is no necessity this should be understood of the same time spoken of in the foregoing part of the chapter, as hath been already observed in several instances. (See note on iv. 2.)

Shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan.] It is a way of speaking in Scripture, to use a definite common number for an indefinite. (See particularly Amos i. 3. 6. 9, &c.) So here *five cities* denote several cities: and of these it is prophesied that they *shall speak the language of Canaan,* that they shall worship God with the *true Israelites,* and with one heart and one mouth glorify the true God together with them. (Compare Zeph. iii. 9.) Or, as some explain it, they shall be of one mind with the true servants of God: so the phrase is used, Josh. ix. 2. where it is said that the kings *gathered themselves to fight with Joshua with one consent.* It is in the Hebrew *with one mouth.* As the Christians are the true seed of Abraham, to whom all the promises belong, so they are sometimes even in the New Testament styled by the name of Jews: (see Rom. ii. 29. Gal. vi. 16. Rev. ii. 9.) but all along in the Old Testament they are described by the titles, the privileges, and the rites of worship, which belong to the Jews. (See notes on ver. 19. lvi. 7. lxvi. 23.)

This place cannot be understood with Grotius, of the Jews going down into Egypt for fear of Sennacherib; for this is what they are severely reproved for, and judgments threatened to both nations upon that account (chap. xxx. xxxi. of this prophecy); whereas what is here said, is spoken as a promise of mercy and comfort. (See note on xviii. 7.)

Learned men observe from this place, where the Jews' language is called the language of Canaan, that the Hebrew is the same with the old Phœnician language, as appears from many instances. (See Bishop Walton's Prolegom. iii. 11—13, &c. ad Biblia Polyglott.)

And swear to the Lord of hosts.] Swear allegiance and fidelity to him: (see Nehem. x. 29. Isa. xlv. 23.) some render the words, *Swear by the Lord of hosts,* in opposition to the false gods the heathens used to swear by. Swearing being a religious invocation of the name of God; it is particularly recommended among other religious duties. (See Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. Jer. iv. 2. Psal. lxiii. 11.)

One shall be called, The city of destruction.] Or, *The city of the sun,* as our margin reads: for our interpreters and several others suppose, that the Hebrew word *Heres* may stand for *Cheres;* so the expression will denote that city which was called by the Greeks *Heriopolis,* or the *city of the sun:* as several other cities had their names from the sun's having an image or temple there: such was Kir-haresh among the Moabites, (xvi. 7. 11.) and Beth-shemesh among the Canaanites, (Josh. xvi. 10.) [There was a city in Egypt, called Beth-shemesh, mentioned Jer. xliii. 13.] But still it may be inquired for what reason the prophet should disguise the name of this city, and not speak it out plain? To which question we may return this satisfactory answer, that the prophet would not call the city by its proper name Nir Cheres, as detesting the name of the idol to which it was dedicated, but chose rather to call it, by way of reproach, Nir Heres, implying that the idol there worshipped should be utterly destroyed. The Jews were forbidden to make mention of the names of the heathen idols, if they could avoid it. (See Exod. xxiii. 13. Josh. xxiii. 7. Psal. xvi. 4.) So they either changed the names of the places dedicated to idol-worship, or else they gave nicknames to them and their idols, and substituted such a word as had some affinity with the true name, but withal expressed their abhorrence and detestation of it. Thus they called Baal *Bosheth,*

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that is, *Shame;* (Jer. xi. 23. Hos. ix. 10.) and when the Mount of Olives was defiled with idolatry they called it the Mount of Corruption, (2 Kings xxiii. 13.) changing the Hebrew name, *Har Mischah,* into *Har Mischith.* In like manner Beth-el, which signifies the house of God, when it came to be the seat of idolatry, was called Beth-aven, *i. e.* the house of vanity, (Hos. iv. 15. x. 5.) So here I suppose the prophet calleth the city of Cheres, by way of irony, the city of Heres. The Chaldee paraphrase joins both the readings together, thus: *One of the cities shall be called Beth-shemesh, which shall be destroyed.*

Ver. 19. *In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt.*] It is a judicious observation of Calvin upon lvi. 7. *Loquitur propheta figuris, quæ suæ ætati conveniunt.* The prophets when they speak of the gentiles coming into the church, express their serving the true God by such acts of devotion as were most in use in their own time, and therefore could be best understood by those to whom they directed their discourses; such were offering sacrifices, and keeping the solemn feasts at Jerusalem, to which the gentiles from all parts should resort, as several prophecies express their conversion. (See ii. 3. xxvii. 13. lvi. 7. lxvi. 23. Zech. xiv. 16. Mal. i. 11.) And to this sense I understand the *altar* and the *sacrifice, oblation* and *vows,* mentioned here, and ver. 21. as taken metonymically, for the worship and service of God in general. Onias, indeed, in aftertimes built an altar and temple in Egypt for the use of the Jews, thinking to fulfil this prophecy literally; but it was against the general sense of his own nation, who thought, that, according to their laws, no temple ought to be built but in Jerusalem. (See Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 30.) From whence it appears that they thought this prophecy was to have a mystical, and not a literal completion.

And a pillar in the border thereof to the Lord.] These and the following words at the beginning of the next verse, allude to Jacob's pillar which he set up in Beth-el, (Gen. xxviii. 18.) and to the altar which the Reubenites and their brethren built upon the borders of Jordan, (Josh. xxii. 10.) *to be a witness between us and you, and the generations after us,* as it there follows.

Ver. 20. *For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.*] Egypt was conquered by Sennacherib (see the following chapter); and some understand the *saviour* and *great one* here mentioned, of the angel that cut off his forces, which was a general deliverance of all the neighbouring countries from his tyranny: the words may fitly be applied to that tyranny which the devil exercises over the heathen world, *who are led captive by him at his will,* from whence they can be redeemed only by the great Saviour of the world, Christ Jesus. Many of the gentiles were sensible of the ignorance they lay under, with respect to the things of God, and had some general hopes and desires of being delivered from the *bondage of corruption:* in which respect Christ is called by the prophet Haggai, *the desire of all nations,* (Hag. ii. 7.) *i. e.* he who alone can answer all their wants and desires.

Ver. 21. *And shall do sacrifice and oblation.*] See note on ver. 19.

Yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.] Making vows, and dedicating free-will-offerings unto God, was a considerable part of religious worship among the Jews. (See Lev. xxvii. 1, &c. Numb. vi. 1, &c. xxx. 1. Deut. xxiii. 21, 22.) The sense of this expression hath been likewise explained on ver. 19. Some explain this of the devout acknowledgments which the Egyptians, the Jews' confederates, made at the temple, upon Sennacherib's defeat. (See note on xviii. 7.)

Ver. 22. *And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it.*] That is, he shall heal it of those plagues wherewith he had smote it.

Ver. 23. *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria.*] The expression denotes the intercourse and correspondence that shall be between the Jews, Assyrians, and Egyptians; (see ver. 24.) which implies, first, the restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions, which is often expressed by their return out of Assyria and Egypt; (see note on xi. 16.) and then that their oppressors themselves should be made members of the same church with them.

And the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.] Shall serve the same God of Israel, who shall be the third in conjunction *with them,* joined together in the holy bond of church society, as it follows.

Ver. 24. *Even a blessing in the midst of the land.*] Or, *In the midst of the earth:* to be *a blessing* is to be a remarkable instance of God's favour, so that it should become a form of blessing for others, to wish their friends the same happiness that these favourites of heaven enjoy. (See Gen. xii. 2. xlviii. 20. Zech. viii. 13.)

Ver. 25. *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.*] *My people, the work of my hands,* and *my inheritance,* are equivalent expressions; and imply, that Egypt and Assyria, that is, those who before were enemies to God's truth and people, (see note on xi. 14.) should be *fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promises,* which were made to the Jews, *by the gospel,* as St. Paul speaks, Ephes. iii. 6.

The work of mine hands.] The expression is always used in this prophet, of those who are in covenant with God, and members of his church. (See xxix. 23. xlv. 11. lx. 21.)

CHAP. XX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter foretells the conquest of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, the Jews' confederates, by Sennacherib. (See the Argument of chap. xviii.)

Ver. 1. *IN the year that Tartan came to Ashdod,* &c.] It appears from ver. 5, 6. that this expedition was made while the Jews were under the apprehension of Sennacherib's invasion; and thereupon, to strengthen themselves, they entered into a confederacy with Egypt and Ethiopia. Tartan is mentioned (2 Kings xviii. 17.) as one of the generals of Sennacherib's army, who is probably meant by Sargon here, and when his armies invaded Judea for a considerable time, and *took all the fenced cities of it,* (2 Kings xviii. 13.) he might then send a detachment, and besiege Ashdod.

Ver. 2. *Loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot.*] As it was a principal part of the prophetic office to denounce God's judgments; so the pro-

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phets commonly wore sackcloth, the habit of mourners, as a dress suitable to their employment. (See Rev. xi. 3.) Of this kind was that *hairy garment* by which Elias and John Baptist are described, 2 Kings i. 8. Matt. iii. 4. and such a garment is spoken of as the usual habit of the prophets, Zech. xiii. 3. Going *barefoot* was likewise a sign of mourning. (See 2 Sam. xv. 30.)

And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.] Those are said to be *naked*, in the Scripture-phrase, who go without their upper garments, (see John xxi. 7. Acts xix. 16.) or have put off the habit proper to their quality. (See 1 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Sam. vi. 20.)

Ver. 3. *Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder*, &c.] Egypt was subdued by Sennacherib before he besieged Jerusalem, as hath been observed upon the first verse of this chapter: to this sense Bochart explains that expression, (xxxvii. 25.) "With the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of Egypt." The Hebrew reads *Metzor*, which is often taken for *Egypt*. (See note on xix. 6.)

Archbishop Usher supposes this war against Egypt, and the rest of the Jews' confederates, to have lasted three years, and to have concluded in the desolation of those countries. (See his Annales V. Test. ad A. M. 3294.) The prophets foreshewed things by actions as well as by words, which sometimes appeared strange and uncouth in the eyes of the people. (See viii. 3. 18. and the notes there, and Ezek. xxiv. 18, 19.)

Ver. 4. *Even with their buttocks uncovered.*] See note on iii. 17.

Ver. 5. *They shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.*] The inhabitants of Judea, or Jerusalem, mentioned in the following verse, shall be ashamed of such weak and insignificant allies. The Jews are often upbraided with placing their confidence in an arm of flesh, and particularly for trusting in the shadow of Egypt. (See the Argument to chap. xix.)

Ver. 6. *And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day.*] Some understand *this isle* of Ashdod, mentioned ver. 1. and the sea-coast of the Philistines, called the *isle of Caphthor*, Jer. xlvii. 4. But the word may more fitly be expounded of *Judea* or *Jerusalem;* for an *isle* sometimes is taken in a general sense for any country or place. (See xl. 15. lix. 18. Job xxii. 30.)

CHAP. XXI.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet renews his threatenings against Babylon, as he does afterward, (chap. xlvii.) to convince the Jews, by this repetition, of the certainty of the event; (see Gen. xli. 32.) and thereby support them under their captivity, when that should come. To this are added two short prophecies against Idumea and Arabia.

Ver. 1. *THE burden of the desert of the sea.*] The ninth verse explains this of Babylon, which is here described by the name of the *desert of the sea*, because although it were at present very populous, yet it should be made desolate, and *turned into pools of water*. (See xiv. 23.) Or the words may be rendered, *The burden of the plain of the sea:* for Babylon stood in a plain, (Gen. xi. 2.) and among many waters. (See Jer. li. 13.) The Hebrew expresses all great collections of waters by the name of *seas*.

As whirlwinds in the south pass through.] The *south* is described by all writers as a stormy wind. (Compare Zech. ix. 14.) God's anger and the overbearing force of a victorious army are elsewhere compared to a whirlwind, or tempest. (See Job xxvii. 20. Psal. lviii. 9. lxxxii. 15. Isa. v. 28. xxix. 6. lxvi. 15. Jer. iv. 13.)

So it cometh from the desert.] From the desert which lieth between Media, or Persia, and Babylon.

Ver. 2. *A grievous vision is declared unto me; The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth.*] The words may be thus translated more agreeably both to grammar and sense: *A grievous vision: There is made known* (or declared) *to me an oppressor of* (or for) *the oppressor, and spoiler for the spoiler:* that is, it is now come to the king of Babylon's turn to feel that oppression and ravage himself, which he before had brought upon others. (Compare xxxiii. 1.)

Go up, O Elam [*or Persia*]*; besiege, O Media.*] The Babylonian monarchy was to be divided between the Medes and Persians. (See Dan. v. 28.)

All the sighing thereof I have made to cease.] Or, *I have made all sorrow* (or sighing) *to cease: i. e.* the sighing of those who have been oppressed by the Babylonian tyranny. (Compare xiv. 3.) For the termination of the word *anchatah, sighing*, seems to be only emphatical, as the grammarians speak, not relative to any person beforementioned.

Ver. 3. *Therefore my loins are filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me*, &c.] This is spoken as in the person of the Chaldeans. (See note on xv. 5.)

I was bowed down at the hearing of it.] As persons that are under great pain or trouble. (See Psal. xxxv. 15. xxxviii. 5.)

Ver. 4. *The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.*] When I thought to be at ease, and to have some respite from trouble and anxiety, then the fearful apprehensions of God's judgments seized me. (Compare Job vii. 13.) This is still spoken by the prophet, as representing the Chaldeans: some understand the words of that festival night, wherein Belshazzar was slain; (Dan. v. 1. 30.) The following verse favours this sense.

Ver. 5. *Prepare a table, watch in the watch-tower*, &c.] The verse may be thus translated: *While they prepare a table, while they watch in the watch-tower, while they eat and drink, arise ye princes*, &c. While the Babylonians make some faint provisions for war, but are more intent upon feasting and luxury, arise ye princes and leaders of the Persian army, and prepare for war in earnest: it appears by Dan. v. 1. 30, 31. and Jer. li. 30. that Babylon was surprised and taken the night after a great festival. (See likewise Herodot. lib. i. cap. 190, 191.)

Anoint the shield.] To make it more beautiful, and more serviceable for war.

Ver. 6. *For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman*, &c.] The prophets are often compared to watchmen, because they foresee evils at a distance, and warn others to avoid them: (see lii. 8. lxii. 6. Ezek. iii. 17. xxxiii. 7. Habak. ii. 1.) so here God orders the prophet, or somebody for him, to act the part of a watchman, and give notice what enemy is marching towards Babylon, as it

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was usual for watchmen to do in times of danger. (See 2 Sam. xviii. 24, 25. 2 Kings ix. 17.)

Ver. 7. *And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen.*] The two horsemen may denote Cyrus and Darius, the principal leaders of the army against Babylon. As chariots were much used in war among the ancients, so we often read in Homer, of two heroes sitting in the same chariot: thus Æneas and Pandarus are described, Iliad v. ver. 220. So Diomedes and Sthenelus, ib. ver. 835. one of them to guide the horses, the other to fight the enemy: the same way of fighting was used among the Germans, as Diodor. Siculus testifies, lib. v.

A chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels.] To denote two different nations, the Medes and Persians, who were to besiege Babylon: as Cyrus was called a *mule* by the oracle, because his father was a Persian, and his mother a Mede. (See Herodot. lib. i. cap. 55. 91.) The foregoing part of the verse may thus be rendered, *He saw a chariot with a couple of horses, a chariot of asses,* &c. and then the first part of the verse will denote the main body of the Persian and Median army, and the following sentences will signify their baggage and provisions.

Ver. 8. *And he cried, A lion.*] Some understand the place, as if by a lion were meant Cyrus: but the marginal reading, *he cried as a lion,* makes an easier sense; the particle *as* being frequently understood. (See xv. 5. Psal. xi. 1. 1 Sam. xxv. 37. Job xi. 12. Nahum iii. 12.)

My lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and I am set in my ward whole nights.] This is said to express his great care and attentiveness. (See ver. 7.) And thereby to confirm the truth of the prediction which follows, (ver. 9.) as that which would as certainly come to pass, as if a watchman had described the approach of the enemy from afar. (Compare Habak. ii. 1.)

Ver. 9. *And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen.*] He confirms the vision related ver. 7. The Hebrew word *parashim* signifies *horses* as well as *horsemen:* (see note on xxii. 6.) and the sense would run easier, if the words were translated, *Here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horses.*

And he answered and said.] Some suppose this to be the answer of the prophet, by which he explains the foregoing vision to be meant of Babylon: but there is no necessity of admitting this interpretation, for the word *answer* is often used in Scripture for the continuation of a discourse. (See particularly Matt. xi. 25. and elsewhere in the gospels.)

Babylon is fallen, is fallen.] The expression is doubled, to denote the certainty of the event. (See Gen. xli. 32.) It is usual, likewise, for the prophets to represent a thing future, as if it were already accomplished, to signify that it will certainly come to pass. (See Jer. l. 2.) To the same sense we are to understand those words of Christ, (John iii. 18.) *He that believeth not, is condemned already; i. e.* will infallibly be condemned, if he persists in his infidelity. (See like instances, xli. 3. xlviii. 21.)

All the graven images of her gods he hath broken to the ground.] See note on xix. 1. Other prophecies speak of the destruction of Babylon, as a decisive stroke, which should give a fatal blow to idolatry: (see xlv. 16. xlvi. 1. Jer. l. 2. li. 17, 18. 47.) which prophecies will be fully completed in the fall of mystical Babylon.

Ver. 10. *O my thrashing, and the corn of my floor.*] The prophet addresses himself to the Jews, who were nearly concerned in the destruction of the Babylonish empire: (though the admonition extends to remote ages. See notes on the beginning of chap. xiii. xiv.) These he applies himself to, as groaning under the oppressions of that heathen government; whereupon he calls them *God's thrashing,* and *the corn of his floor,* because they had been so severely bruised by their oppressors, although these calamities were intended by God to purge the pure corn from the chaff. To be *thrashed* signifies to undergo great calamities, or be subdued by a potent enemy. (See xli. 15. Jer. li. 33. Micah iv. 13.) [The way of thrashing, in the eastern countries, was by leading oxen over the corn lying on the floor, who drew after them a pair of dented iron wheels, or else heavy planks stuck full of sharp flints; so that the corn was trodden out by the feet of the oxen, and the straw cast into small parcels by the wheels or flints. (See xxviii. 27, 28.) The same way of treading out the corn was practised by the Romans, as appears by Varro, (lib. i. de Re Rust. cap. 52.) "Excuti grassa jumentis, junctis, ac tribulo; id fit e tabula lapidibus aut ferro asperata, quæ imposito auriga, aut pondere grandi, trahitur jumentis junctis; aut ex asseribus dentatis cum orbiculis."] This way of bruising the corn doth fitly resemble the weak being crushed by the mighty.

Ver. 11. *The burden of Dumah.*] Or *Idumea,* as appears by the mention of Mount Seir, which follows.

He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night?] One or other of the Idumeans is inquisitive every night what tidings the watchman brings of the approach of the enemies. (See ver. 6.)

Ver. 12. *The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.*] This verse hath puzzled all the commentators. Without repeating their several conjectures, one may conceive the sense to be this: *You inquire every night what tidings that brings, but the morning may be as dangerous as the night.* (See Ezek. vii. 7. 10.)

If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come.] Or, *return, and come again,* as the old translation reads, which was published under king Henry VIII. (Compare Job xvii. 10.) If you will inquire indeed, and ask questions in earnest, inquire of God first, ask his mercy, and afterward come again, and ye shall have a more favourable answer.

Ver. 13. *In the forest of Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.*] This prophecy threateneth one clan of the Arabians, those who were the posterity of Dedan, the grandson of Abraham, (Gen. xxv. 3.) and tells them they shall be driven from their tents or habitations, and forced to seek for shelter in the woods and thickets. They are called *travelling companies,* because most of the Arabians lived in moveable tents, and were therefore called *Scenitæ,* and removed with their cattle from place to place, for the convenience of pasture, like the Nomades in Africa.

Ver. 14. *The inhabitants of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty.*] The words describe the straits the Dedanites were reduced to, being forced to fly from the enemy without any provisions for their present sustenance; whereupon their neighbours, the Temanites, (the posterity of Tema, Ishmael's son, Gen. xx. 15.) took pity upon their forlorn condition. To relieve travellers with necessaries, was an instance of hospitality received among all nations. (See Deut. xxiii. 4.)

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Ver. 16. *Within a year, according to the years of a hireling.*] Within that precise time. (See xvi. 14.) This description of a year is used to distinguish it from a *prophetical year*, which consists of three hundred and sixty-five years, reckoning every day for a year: (see Numb. xiv. 34. Ezek. iv. 6.) or from some remarkable time in general; in which sense we read of the *acceptable year of the Lord*, (Isa. lxi. 2.) and the *year of recompence*, (xxxiv. 8.)

Ver. 17. *And the residue of the number of archers, of the mighty men of Kedar, shall be diminished.*] The prophet extends this judgment to another division of the Arabians, which descended from Kedar, Ishmael's son, (Gen. xxv. 13.) who were famous for the use of the bow, at which weapon their ancestor Ishmael was very expert. (See Gen. xxi. 20.) The same people are said to dwell in *the tents of Kedar*, (Psal. cxx. 5. Cant. i. 5.) and were remarkable for their swarthiness (the word *Kedar* signifying black or tawny), according to that description the church gives of herself in that place of the Canticles, *I am as black as the tents of Kedar, but comely as the curtains of Solomon:* for that is the true order of the words.

CHAP. XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Our English interpreters have very much mistook the design of the following prophecy, telling us, in the contents, that the former part of the chapter relates to the invasion of Jewry by the Persians: an occurrence mentioned neither in sacred nor profane history, and not at all probable, whether we consider the distance of Persia from Jewry, or that the Persians were at this time subject to the king of Assyria, and upon that account are mentioned (ver. 6.) as part of Sennacherib's army, with which he invaded Judea, and besieged Jerusalem; to which juncture of time the former part of the chapter relates, as will appear upon the notes of the ninth and tenth verses. The latter part of it is a denunciation against Shebna, a man of authority in Hezekiah's court.

Ver. 1. *THE burden of the valley of vision.*] By the *valley of vision* is meant Jerusalem, which was surrounded with hills, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) and is called by that name, because this and many other prophecies are directed to it.

What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?] To discover the motions of the enemy, or to look out for assistance. (Compare xv. 3.)

Ver. 2. *Thou art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city.*] This may be better understood of the time past, as if the prophet had said, Thou hast been full of noise and multitudes, mirth, and jollity: (compare xxiii. 7. xxxii. 13.) but now a deep and melancholy silence hath seized thee.

Thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.] But are dead with fear.

Ver. 3. *They are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.*] This part of the verse may be rendered more clearly thus, *All that are found in thee have conspired together, for fear of the archers, they have conspired together,* [and] *have fled a great way off.* The adverb *merachok* doth not only signify *from far*, but likewise *to a place a great way off.* (See xvii. 13. xxiii. 7. lvii. 9.)

Ver. 4. *Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly,* &c.] The Hebrew verb *shangah* is rendered by our interpreters *depart*, or *turn away* from me, Job vii. 19. xiv. 6. *i. e.* let me alone to myself, that I may indulge my grief. The prophet here sympathizes with the afflictions of his people. (Compare Jer. iv. 19. ix. 1.)

Ver. 5. *For it is a day of trouble.*] Compare xxxvii. 3.

Breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.] Some are breaking down the walls of the houses in the suburbs; (see ver. 10.) whilst others are giving continual alarms to those that guard the passes of the mountains, and calling to them stoutly to maintain their posts: (see Psal. cxxi. 1. Jer. iii. 23.) the latter part of the verse may be understood of those who encourage one another to flee to the mountains for refuge. (Compare Jer. xiii. 16. xvi. 16.)

Ver. 6. *And Elam bare the quiver.*] The Persians were famous archers: (see Jer. xlix. 35.) and were at this time subjects to the king of Assyria, and made up part of the army wherewith Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, that army consisting of several sorts of nations. (See xxix. 7.)

With chariots of men and horsemen.] Or horses; for so the word *parashim* often signifies. (See xxi. 7. 9. xxviii. 28. 1 Sam. viii. 11.)

And Kir uncovered the shield.] This Kir is a city in Media: (see 2 Kings xvi. 9. Amos i. 5.) the Medes were at that time subjects to the king of Assyria. (See 2 Kings xvii. 6.) There was another city of the same name in Moab. (See xv. 1.)

Ver. 8. *And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.*] Mr. White hath given the best sense of this verse, translating it thus, *And he (i. e.* the enemy) *shall dismantle the fortified cities of Judah, and in that day shalt thou look to the armour of the house of the forest; i. e.* when you see the army of the enemy approach, you will think it high time to provide for your defence: or else, retaining the common translation, we may explain the words to this sense: When the enemy hath discovered the weakness of those fortresses in which you placed your trust, then you will bethink yourselves of providing arms for your defence. *The house of the forest* was an armoury within the city of Jerusalem, as appears from hence; because the golden shields, which were carried before Solomon when he went to the temple, were laid up in this place. (See 1 Kings x. 17. compared with 2 Chron. xii. 9—11.) It was called the *house of the forest*, or the *house of the forest of Lebanon*, (1 Kings viii. 2.) as some think, because of its stately groves and walks, which resembled the forest of Lebanon.

Ver. 9. *Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many.*] At the same time you will view the walls of Jerusalem, and repair the breaches of it. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.) The *city of David* was that part of Jerusalem, which was properly called Zion, which David won from the Jebusites, and called it by his own name. (See 2 Sam. v. 7. 9. 1 Kings viii. 1.)

And ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.] There were two pools or lakes which supplied Jerusalem with water; the upper pool, (see vii. 9. xxxvi. 2.) called Gihon, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. called likewise the old pool, ver. 11. of this chapter: and the lower pool, mentioned in

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this verse. Hezekiah made a conveyance to bring down the waters from the upper pool into this lower. (2 Chron. xxxii. 30.)

Ver. 10. *And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem,* &c.] Or marked out what houses should be pulled down for the better fortifying the walls of the city.

Ver. 11. *Ye also made a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool.*] The ditch was a channel to carry off the waters from the upper to the lower pool. (See ver. 9.) The outer wall of these two seems to have been built now, to fortify the city against the siege which they expected. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. Jer. xxxix. 4.)

[*Ye gathered together the waters of the lower pools.*] Gihon and Siloam were both one fountain, which had two streams issuing out of it, called the *upper* and *lower pool.* These two streams run in two contrary courses, one eastward, the other westward. See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 667. and his Chorographical Table, at the end of the second volume.]

But ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.] In your adversity you have not looked up to God, by whose blessing upon David this city was built, where he promised to place his name, and to continue his especial protection over it. God is said to make and to build cities, as well as to destroy them. (See xxxvii. 26. Jer. xxxi. 4. 28.)

And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, &c.] God's judgments did loudly call upon men to humble themselves before him, and try to avert his anger by fasting, and other acts of humiliation.

And to baldness.] See note on xv. 2.

Ver. 13. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.*] The words of desperate persons, expecting nothing but death, who thought it in vain to call upon God, because they looked upon their case as incapable of relief, and therefore resolved to spend that little time they had to live as merrily as they could: such a story is told by Livy, of the senators of Capua; who having revolted from the Romans to Hannibal, and despairing of mercy when the city was retaken, made a feast together, and poisoned themselves at the end of the entertainment, (lib. xxvi. cap. 14.)

Ver. 14. *Surely this iniquity shall not be purged away from you till you die.*] This your despair of God's mercy, and hardening your hearts against his judgments, shall never be forgiven you: (compare 1 Sam. xv. 35. 2 Sam. vi. 23. Job xxvii. 5.) but whatever respite you may have at present, you shall at length die in your iniquity.

Ver. 15. *Go, get thee to this treasurer, to Shebna, who is over the house.*] Shebna had the chief management of the king's household and family; he was removed afterward to be scribe, or secretary, a place of less honour and dignity, and Eliakim was put into his place, (xxxvi. 4. 22.)

Ver. 16. *What hast thou here?*] Or, *What hast thou to do here?* Compare the expression here with Jer. ii. 18. This Shebna seems to have been a foreigner, and not well-affected to the Jewish religion.

Or whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre?] What relations or family hast thou here, that thou art ambitious of raising thee a stately sepulchre, or burial-place, for thyself and thine heirs?

And that graveth a habitation for himself in a rock.] A monument that should preserve his memory to all succeeding times; the expression denotes security: (see Numb. xxiv. 21.) sepulchres were commonly hewn out in rocks. (See Matt. xxvii. 60.)

Ver. 17. *The Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity.*] See the following verse.

And will surely cover thee.] Persons under disgrace or condemnation had their heads covered. (See 2 Sam. xv. 30. Esth. vii. 8. Jer. xiv. 3.)

But if we follow our marginal reading, that refers both the sentences of this verse to that robe of state which belonged to Shebna, as ruler of the king's household. (Compare ver. 21.)

Ver. 18. *He will surely violently turn thee and toss thee like a ball into a large country.*] Some interpret the words thus; *He will wrap thee up close like a ball or bundle, and carry thee captive into a large or wide country:* but I am apt to think the Septuagint, with whom the Chaldee paraphrase agrees, have given the best sense of this place, who join the latter part of the foregoing verse with this, and translate both verses to this purpose: *Behold, the Lord shall carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and shall divest thee of thy robe; he shall strip thee of thy glorious coronet, and shall cast thee out like a ball into a wide country.* The grammarians observe, that many verbs in Hebrew have two contrary significations: so *sheresh* signifies to *take root,* and to *pluck up by the roots; chata* to *sin,* and to *make an atonement for sin; berek* to *bless,* and to *curse; nephesh,* a *soul* or *living creature,* and a *dead carcass:* (see Dr. Pocock's Not. Miscellan. cap. 2.) and by the same reason the words used here, *natah* and *tsanaph,* may signify both to *adorn* and to *disrobe:* we may farther observe, that the verb *tsanaph,* and the noun derived from it, are in all other places used only for adorning the head with a mitre.

Like a ball.] According to the interpretation just now given, the expression here is elliptical, and runs thus in the Hebrew, *He shall strip thee of thy coronet, like a ball into a large country;* which ellipsis is to be supplied thus; *and shall cast thee like a ball,* &c. See a like instance, Psal. lxxxix. 39. "Thou hast profaned the crown of thy servant, by casting it to the ground;" so our interpreters do rightly supply the sense. (See likewise Pool's Synopsis upon Isa. vii. 6.)

Into a large country: there shalt thou die.] Where thou shalt live and die in obscurity.

And there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.] The honours thou didst arrive to, shall turn to the reproach of thy lord who preferred thee.

Ver. 19. *And from thy state shall he pull thee down.*] That is, thou shalt be pulled down, the active being put for the impersonal, by a usual Hebraism. Thus Exod. vii. 13. our translation reads, *He hardened Pharaoh's heart;* but ix. 35. the same words are better translated, *The heart of Pharaoh was hardened.* (See xliv. 18.)

Ver. 21. *And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle.*] A girdle was a mark of dignity, and therefore worn both by priests, (Exod. xxviii. 40.) and princes, (1 Sam. xviii. 4.) and designed for both strength and honour. (See notes on v. 27. xi. 5.)

He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.] This denotes his tender care of those who were under his government. Princes themselves sometimes style their chief ministers by the name of parents:

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frequent instances of which may be seen in the rescripts of Constantine and his successors to their *Præfecti Prætorio*, in the Theodosian and Justinian codes.

Ver. 22. *The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder.*] A key is an emblem of trust; and the expression alludes to the fashion of keys in old time, which were long, and made like a hook, and then laid upon the shoulder, and worn there as the badge of an office: concerning which custom, see Huetius Demonstr. Evang. prop. ix. cap. 105.

So he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.] Herein Eliakim was an eminent type of Christ, who, *as a son over his own house*, hath an unlimited authority in the church. (See Rev. iii. 7. compared with Matt. xvi. 19.) The latter part of the expression is applied to God, Job xii. 14. Indeed, the words imply such a sovereign and absolute power, as cannot belong to any person, but such a one as is God as well as man.

Ver. 23. *And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place.*] Not to be moved as his predecessor was. (Compare Ezra ix. 8.)

Ibid. and Ver. 24. *And he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house*, &c.] He shall be an honour to his family; they shall all depend upon him for promotion, from the highest to the lowest, from those who are advanced to the more honourable offices, to those who are designed for the meaner services, as the like metaphor, 2 Tim. ii. 20.

Ver. 25. *In that day shall the nail that was fastened in the sure place be removed.*] Shebna, that thought himself so secure in his station, shall be displaced. (See ver. 23.)

And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off.] All his dependants shall fall with him, and be removed from those posts which they obtained by his interest and favour.

CHAP. XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

This prophecy may best be understood of Nebuchadnezzar's laying siege to Tyre, and taking it; which is likewise particularly foretold by Ezekiel, xxvi. 7, &c. with the two following chapters. This siege lasted thirteen years, as Josephus shews out of Philostratus, and the Phœnician annals, (Antiq. lib. x. cap. 11. *ad fin.* and lib. i. contr. Appion. p. 1046.) Upon which account, God promises Nebuchadnezzar the kingdom of Egypt, as a reward for the great pains and service he undertook in the siege of Tyre, (Ezek. xxix. 18.)

Ver. 1. *HOWL, ye ships of Tarshish.*] The phrase signifies any merchant-ships, particularly those that trade into Spain. (See note on ii. 16.) As Tyre was one of the most famous marts in the world in those times; so the destruction of it must be a great loss to all merchant-adventurers.

So that there is no house, no entering in.] Every house, or warehouse in Tyre, is shut up, and all trade ceased. (Compare xxiv. 10.)

From the land of Chittim it is revealed unto them.] Chittim, in Scripture, signifies all the countries lying upon the Mediterranean Sea, called *the isles of Chittim*, Ezek. xxvii. 6. The words import, that the news of the siege of Tyre should be dispersed into all the trafficking parts upon the Egean and Ionian seas, and so reach the ears of those that trade in the most western coasts. The sense which the Septuagint give of the latter part of the verse, is easy, and reconcileable with the Hebrew: thus they render it, *It is laid waste, so that none come* [to wit] *out of the land of Chittim; it is carried away captive.* Bochart understands the word *Chittim* here, and at the twelfth verse, of the Cutheans, or Babylonians; and then taking the verb *niglah*, for *being carried captive*, as the Septuagint and Vulgar Latin explain it, the sense runs very easy thus, *From the land of the Cutheans doth their captivity come.*

Ver. 2. *Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle.*] Tyre was placed in an island: (see Ezek. xxvii. 3. xxviii. 2.) and it is here commanded to be *still*, or silent, to signify that all that noise which is heard in populous cities should cease, and the place be reduced to solitude. (Compare xiv. 11. xv. 1. xxii. 2. Jer. xxv. 10, 11.)

[*Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle.*] This expression is rather a description of the New Tyre than of the Old; the new city being built upon an island (see Ezek. xxvii. 3. and the Argument to the notes upon chap. xxvi. of that prophecy): but it is certain, Nebuchadnezzar only destroyed the old city. So the word *isle* seems to be used here improperly, as it is in many other texts, for a maritime place or town. See the note on xi. 11.]

Thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.] Tyre and Zidon were famous for merchandise and navigation, and helped to enrich each other.

Ver. 3. *And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue.*] The English translation, published under queen Elizabeth, gives us a clearer sense of this verse thus, *The seed of Nilus growing by the abundance of waters, and the harvest of the river was her revenues.* Tyre made herself rich by transporting corn out of Egypt into foreign countries. The overflowing of the Nile (called *Sihor* here, and Jer. ii. 18.) made Egypt so fruitful, that it was looked upon as one of the great granaries of the world, and afterward supplied Rome with a great part of the corn which was spent in that mighty city, as it did Constantinople in following times. Whereupon the government of Egypt was looked upon as an extraordinary trust, and always reserved to the disposal of the emperor. (See Tacitus, Annal. ii. and Histor. lib. i. statim ab initio.) By *the river* is meant the Nile, by way of excellence. (See note on xi. 15.)

Ver. 4. *Be ashamed, O Zidon.*] Zidon was a partaker both in the prosperity and adversity of Tyre. (See ver. 2. 12.)

For the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, &c.] Tyre is called the *sea*, because its inhabitants looked upon the sea as their proper element; and the *strength of the sea*, because it was strong at sea, both by its situation and the strength of its naval forces; and the city is introduced here as bemoaning her desolate condition, that she is become as though she had never had any children or inhabitants, because they are now quite gone or destroyed.

Ver. 5. *As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.*] The words as they stand in our translation imply, that the Zidonians, (spoken of ver. 4.) or, in general, other neighbouring places, shall

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be as much concerned at the ill news of the destruction of Tyre, as they were at the calamity of Egypt, mentioned chap. xix. But there is a difficulty, admitting this sense, because the destruction of Tyre, here spoken of, was before that of Egypt; if we mean that calamity of Egypt which is usually joined with the destruction of Tyre in the prophets. (See Jer. xxv. 19. 22. Ezek. xxix. 18, 19.) Therefore others read this verse thus, *As soon as the report of Tyre shall come to, or be heard in, Egypt, they shall be in great pain for it; viz.* because they exported their corn to Tyre, and made a gainful trade by it. (See ver. 3.) And this sense the Septuagint follow.

Ver. 6. *Pass ye over to Tarshish.*] Leave the place of your nativity, and betake yourselves for refuge to some of the ports which lie upon the Mediterranean Sea, (see ver. 1.) where the Tyrians used to traffic, and where they might hope to settle themselves. (See ver. 7. 12.) The Septuagint understand the place of Carthage, which was a colony transplanted from Tyre.

Howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.] See ver. 2.

Ver. 7. *Is this your joyous city.*] Great cities, being the centres of trade and wealth, are usually the seats of all kinds of gaiety and luxury. (See note on xxii. 2.)

Whose antiquity is of ancient days?] Tyre is spoken of as a strong city in the time of Joshua, (Josh. xix. 29.) Μετὰ Σιδόνα μεγίστη τῶν Φοινίκων καὶ ἀρχαιοτάτη πόλις Τύρος ἐστί, (Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 756.) *Next to Zidon, Tyre is the greatest and most ancient of all the Phœnician cities.*

Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.] The prophet speaks of Tyre as of a tender and delicate woman not used to hardships, who yet should be forced to travel on foot tedious journeys into foreign countries, being driven from her own habitation. (Compare xlvii. 2.)

Ver. 8, 9. *Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city?* &c.] Who but God, whose decrees none can frustrate? Whose purpose it is to bring down the pride of that topping city, who does vaunt itself as the queen of cities. (See Ezek. xxvii. 3. xxviii. 2. and compare Rev. xviii. 7.)

Ver. 9. *The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory.*] See ii. 11.

Ver. 10. *Pass through the land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish.*] According to this translation Tyre is called the daughter of Tarshish, because it was enriched by the sea-trade, especially the traffic which came from the Spanish or African coasts, as Huetius interprets the place, (lib. de Navigat. Solomon. cap. 3. numb. 9.) So the prophet here exhorts her inhabitants to make all possible speed, and with the swiftness of a river to get out of their own country, and from the reach of the enemy. But others translate the words, *Pass into thy land, O daughter of Tarshish,* and understand them of the city Tarshish, or the merchants of that place, as if it were an exhortation to them to return home. Their merchandise had formerly flowed in like a river into the ports of Tyre, but now that gainful traffic, their strength and support, would entirely cease. (Compare ver. 14.)

Ver. 11. *He stretched out his hand over the sea; he shook the kingdoms.*] The Lord, mentioned in the latter part of the verse, stretched out his hand over Tyre, called the *sea,* ver. 4. and the neighbouring kingdoms were frightened at the news of such a terrible judgment.

Ver. 12. *Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon.*] Tyre was probably a colony of Zidonians, and therefore called here the daughter of Zidon: colonies commonly retained the name of the mother-city: thus Rome was called New Troy, and Carthage the Tyrian city. (See Spanheim de Numismat. dissert. iv. p. 436, 437.) It is certain, that of the two cities Zidon was much the ancientest, being mentioned by Moses at the peopling of the world after the flood, (Gen. x. 19. and again, xlix. 13.) Afterward it is called by Joshua Great Zidon, (Josh. xi. 8.) Homer, likewise, takes notice of Zidon, but not of Tyre. The authority of Strabo is express to the same purpose. (See note upon ver. 7.) The prophet calls Tyre an *oppressed virgin,* because she was conquered, and, as it were, ravished by her enemies: whereas those cities which never came into a conqueror's hands are styled virgins, as having preserved their integrity. (See xxxvii. 22.)

Pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.] See notes on ver. 1. 6. Bochart understands the Cutheans by Chittim (which word is here written Chittijm), as he does Chittim in the first verse: so the sense of the verse will be, Thou shalt be carried captive to Cutha, or Susiana: (see 2 Kings xvii. 24.) a province lying upon the east of Euphrates; but *there also shalt thou have no rest:* but God's judgments shall still pursue thee.

Ver. 13. *Behold the land of the Chaldeans.*] Even the Chaldeans themselves, who are your conquerors, their prosperity will not be perpetual: as their beginning was small, so their destruction will come to pass in due time.

This people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness.] Within the memory of man, Baladan, or Nabonassor, (see xxxix. 1.) founded Babylon, to be the metropolis of the Scenites, that dwelt in tents before, dispersed through Arabia Deserta: (see xiii. 20.) and it came by degrees to be raised to that strength and magnificence in which now we see it. This is Sir John Marsham's interpretation of this difficult text. (Chron. Can. p. 478. edit. fol.)

Though Babylon was as old as Nimrod, (Gen. x. 10. xi. 9.) yet it might undergo several turns of fortune, as most other cities have done, and after it was gone to decay, be restored by Baladan, as it was afterward rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar, (Dan. iv. 30.) Thus Rehoboam is said to have built Hebron, (2 Chron. xi. 10.) which yet was one of the oldest cities in the world. (See Numb. xiii. 22.)

He brought it to ruin.] *The Lord of hosts.* (See ver. 9.) Some translate the words thus, *It is brought to ruin:* the active being put for the impersonal. (See note on xxii. 19.) The prophet foresees the destruction of Babylon, mentioned chap. xiii. and speaks of it here as already come to pass: a way of speaking usual in the prophets to denote the certainty of the event. (See xxi. 9.)

[*He brought it to ruin.*] The people of the Chaldeans, an upstart nation, have brought Tyre to ruin. So Vitringa upon the place. (See the note upon ver. 1. and Ezek. xxvi. 7.) By the Assyrian, in the former part of the verse, the same commentator understands Ninus.]

Ver. 14. *Howl, ye ships of Tarshish.*] See ver. 1. 10.

Ver. 15. *Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king.*] The word *king* is put here for kingdom, as the same word is used, Dan. vii. 17. viii. 21. Thus, Rev. xvii. 10. *seven kings* are seven governments

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succeeding one another. So this expression denotes the duration of the Babylonish monarchy, whose dominion over all the neighbouring countries should last seventy years; and when that time was expired, the Tyrians, with other people, oppressed by the Babylonian government, should recover their ancient liberty. (Compare Jer. xxv. 9—12. 22. xxvii. 3. 6, 7.)

[*Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years.*] The destruction of Tyre was some years after that of Jerusalem. (See Dr. Prideaux, ad an. A. C. 573.) But the prophet Jeremy seems to confine the devastations of all those countries which Nebuchadnezzar conquered, to the space of seventy years, at which time an end should be put to the Babylonish empire. (See Jer. xxv. 9. 11, 12.) But there are several ways of computing those seventy years. See the note upon Zech. i. 12.]

Ver. 16. *Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten,* &c.] The imperative is here put for the future. (See note on ii. 9.) Cities are often compared to women, (see ver. 12. Jer. vi. 2.) and sometimes to harlots, by reason of those vices which too much prevail in great and rich cities, and infect those that resort to them. Lewd women are commonly described in ancient authors as skilful in music, which is one of the arts that they used to inveigle men into their company. The expressions in this verse, as well as those which follow, of *Tyre's committing fornication with all the kingdoms of the world,* signify the several arts which she had to entice merchants to trade with her, the frauds she made use of in managing her trade, and the luxury which her traffic promoted. Compare Rev. xviii. 3, 9. where the same expressions are applied in a spiritual sense to mystical Babylon.

Ver. 18. *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness unto the Lord.*] The sense of this verse may be, that several of the Tyrians in aftertimes shall become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and shall devote part of their substance to the service of the temple at Jerusalem. (See the note upon xlv. 14.) But there is no necessity of supposing that this part of the prophecy should be fulfilled just upon the restoration of Tyre; for it is usual for the prophets to join together things relating to the same place or people, though the fulfilling the several parts of the prophecy may belong to several different ages. (See iv. 2.) And this I take to be the case here. The prophets commonly express heathens and idolaters in general by some remarkable name, as that of Egypt, Babylon, and the like. (See the note on xi. 14.) In this sense I suppose the name of Tyre to be used in this verse, and in the same sense the *daughter of Tyre* is understood by most interpreters upon Psalm xlv. 12. not so as to exclude that particular city, but withal to signify that both that place and many others which were strangers to the true religion, should at length be converted, and consecrate a great part of their wealth and substance to the service of God. (See notes on xviii. 7.)

Her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord.] Her riches shall be set apart for the maintenance of those that attend upon God's service: an allusion to the office of the priests and Levites, who by turns gave constant attendance at the temple.

To eat sufficiently.] The expression alludes to those feasts which the Jews made at Jerusalem of their first-fruits and other holy things: and of which the priests and Levites had a particular share. (See Deut. xii. 18, 19. xiv. 23. 27.)

CHAP. XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

After the several denunciations of God's judgments upon the Jews, and all the neighbouring countries, contained in the foregoing chapters, from the thirteenth onward; in this the prophet gives a general description of the state of that part of the world, especially of the ten tribes, whose country was ruined, and themselves carried captive, by Shalmaneser, under these calamities: but withal he uses such expressions as plainly denote the general destruction of the world at the last day: as indeed all God's particular judgments are earnests and forerunners of the general judgment. (See note on xiii. 10.)

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, the Lord maketh the earth empty.*] The Hebrew word *haärets,* is promiscuously rendered in this chapter by our interpreters, either *earth* or *land:* and may be taken in a larger or narrower sense, as the context inclines us to understand it.

Ver. 2. *And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest.*] Or, *the prince,* as the word does likewise signify. This and the following expressions denote, that all orders and conditions shall be equally involved in the same common calamity.

Ver. 3. *The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled.*] Shall be deprived both of its riches and inhabitants.

Ver. 4. *The haughty people of the earth do languish.*] These suffer most under such calamities, as having most to lose, and not being used to hardships. (See ii. 12.)

Ver. 5. *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.*] The contagion of sin infecteth the very ground, and bringeth a curse upon it, (see ver. 6.) making it obnoxious to God's judgments. (See Gen. iii. 17. Numb. xxxv. 33. Psal. cvii. 34.)

Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.] So the wicked *horn* in Daniel is said to *change times and laws; i. e.* to abrogate God's laws and the ordinances of his service, and substitute new ones, (Dan. vii. 25.) By the *everlasting covenant,* is meant that covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Sinai; (see Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.) and the expression alludes to Gen. xvii. 7. where God calls the covenant between him and Abraham, *an everlasting covenant, berith olam,* in the Hebrew: because it was to endure for a long succession of years, called *olam* in that language, and to last till the new *olam,* or the age of the Messias: (see note on ii. 2.) and then was to be more eminently completed in the spiritual seed of Abraham.

Ver. 6. *Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.*] Are destroyed by fire and sword, and entirely consumed. (Compare xlii. 25.)

Ver. 7. *The new wine mourneth; the vine languisheth.*] There is a destruction of the vineyards, and the fruits of the earth are consumed by hostile invasions. (Compare xvi. 8, 9. Joel i. 10. 12.)

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Ver. 8. *The mirth of tabrets ceaseth.*] There is no place for mirth or the expressions of it when men are under great calamities. (Compare Jer. vii. 34. xv. 9. xxv. 10. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hos. ii. 11.)

Ver. 9. *They shall not drink wine with a song.*] Those that can command wine under this scarcity will have no heart to drink it; nor will it be able to cheer their spirits under such afflictions.

Ver. 10. *The city of confusion is broken down.*] The word *tohu*, which our English translation renders *confusion*, signifies likewise desolation; (see xxxiv. 11.) and this sense of the word is most proper here: as if it had been said, Every city is the image of desolation. (Compare ver. 12. and xxv. 2.) Some understand by *the city*, Samaria; the head of the kingdom of Israel, which was now ruined by Shalmaneser.

Ver. 13. *When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive-tree,* &c.] Compare xvii. 5, 6. When the prophets denounce God's judgments upon his people, they commonly conclude with a promise of still reserving *a remnant;* though they were to be but few in comparison of those who are involved in the general destruction. (See notes on i. 9. iv. 2.)

Ver. 14. *They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord.*] They shall magnify the power of God, which appeared so signally in their deliverance.

They shall cry aloud from the sea.] Or, *from the isles of the sea,* as it is expressed in the following verse; *i. e.* from the isles of the western or Mediterranean Sea, whither many of the Jews were scattered, and from whence they should return into their own country in the latter days. (See note on xi. 11.) The Hebrew word *Ijam* signifies the *West* as well as the sea, because the Mediterranean Sea lay westward of Judea; (see Josh. xxiii. 4.) and so the word is rendered by some interpreters here. (Compare Hos. xi. 10. where the word is translated the *west*.) This verse is to be understood of the final restoration of the Jews, as some other parts of the chapter plainly relate to the consummation of all things. (See ver. 19, 20. 23.) The prophets take hints from the state of things in or near their own time, to describe what shall come to pass in the latter times; as hath been before observed upon x. 20. (See likewise the note upon xxx. 19.)

Ver. 15. *Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires.*] In the fiery trials of affliction, out of which the just shall be delivered as out of the midst of the fire. (Compare xliii. 2. and see the note on iv. 2.)

In the isles of the sea.] See the note upon ver. 14.

Ver. 16. *From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.*] *From the uttermost part of the earth* means the same as *from the isles of the sea,* in the foregoing verses; from these utmost regions have we heard the joyful acknowledgment of the righteous, praising God for their deliverance, and for all the glorious things he hath done for them; making them thereby remarkable in the eyes of the world, as his favourites. Some understand the word *righteous* of God, as if it were *glory to the righteous God:* but we may observe, that the word *Tsebi* is often taken for *Judea,* as being *the glory of all lands,* as Ezekiel speaks, xx. 6. where he uses this very word. (Compare Dan. viii. 9. xi. 16. 41. Jer. iii. 19.) And if we take the word in this sense, the meaning of the place will be, that the substance of their hymns were, that now the promised land should be restored to the righteous seed of Abraham: which confirms the interpretation given of ver. 14. that the context relates to the final restoration of the Jews.

But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!] *Leanness* sometimes signifies God's plagues or judgments, which are like a consumption of the vitals. (See x. 16. xvii. 4. Psal. cvi. 16.) Or the word may signify the sins and defects of God's people, the thoughts of which caused inward grief and consumption of heart to the prophet: and it very much abated the joy which he had conceived upon the miraculous deliverance of the righteous, when he considered how many were involved in the calamities of the wicked.

The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously.] The word *bogedhim* often signifies the transgressors of, or apostates from, God's law; so it is used xlviii. 8. Jer. v. 11. and elsewhere: and in this sense the Septuagint understand it here; which agrees best with the scope of the place, and implies, that iniqnity should very much abound, even among the professors of the true religion, and should bring down God's judgments in a terrible manner upon great numbers of them.

Ver. 17. *Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth!*] It seems to be a proverbial expression, denoting divers sorts of calamities, some of which if men happen to escape, they should fall into others as bad. (See Jer. xlviii. 43.) As if a man, flying from his enemy out of fear, should fall into a pit; and escaping from thence should be taken in a snare. (Compare Amos v. 15.) The three Hebrew words, *pachad, pachath,* and *pach,* are a paronomasia, or have an affinity in sound with each other, which cannot be translated into another language. Such allusions are sometimes used by the sacred writers, (see Bishop Sanderson's Sermon on Eccles. vii. 1. No. 3.) and are not disdained by the greatest masters of wit and elegance: witness that noted passage between Julian the apostate and St. Basil; they were acquainted, as having studied together at Athens; and the former, having read over a certain treatise recommended by St. Basil to his perusal, gave this magisterial censure of it, Ἀνέγνων, Ἔγνων, Κατέγνων. To which that eloquent father returned this smart repartee, Ἀνέγνως, οὐκ ἔγνως· εἰ γὰρ ἔγνως, οὐ κατέγνως. (St. Basil's Epist. 207, 208.) The beauty of these sentences cannot be translated into another language.

Ver. 18. *For the windows from on high are opened, the foundations of the earth do shake.*] A plain allusion to the description of the deluge, Gen. vii. 11. The prophet describes the destruction of the present world at the last day by expressions taken from the destruction of the old world; for, to use St. Peter's words, "As the world which then was, perished by water, so the heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7. (See the notes upon the following verses.)

This one text does sufficiently confute an extravagant notion of one of the great libertines in opinion of the present age, who would fain persuade the world that the Pentateuch was writ a considerable time after the captivity of the ten tribes; a fancy which hath not one probable argument to maintain it, and may be confuted almost out of

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every writer of the Old Testament from Moses downward.

Ver. 19. *The earth is utterly broken down; the earth is clean dissolved; the earth is moved exceedingly.*] A farther allusion to the deluge, especially if we admit of a late ingenious hypothesis, which maintains that the destruction of the earth at the deluge, was chiefly caused by the breaking down of its arch, and its falling into the abyss.

This, and the foregoing verse, may be thought an hyperbolical description of the desolations which wars and other plagues made in Judea, and the neighbouring countries; as if God had rained down vengeance upon sinners from above, and heaven and earth had conspired to punish the wicked: and we may observe, that the prophet Jeremy describes the like calamities in much the same expressions, (Jer. iv. 23, &c.) But the words do in their full import evidently point at the judgment of the last day, as in the following verses more plainly appears.

Ver. 20. *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.*] This may be understood of its inhabitants, who shall be at their wits' end for fear. (Compare xix. 14. Psal. cvii. 27.)

And shall be removed like a cottage.] It is the world to come alone that hath foundations that cannot be shaken. (Heb. xii. 27.)

And the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it.] See the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 21. *The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.*] As the two foregoing verses plainly respect the dissolution of all things, so this and those that follow, do evidently look the same way. The words here import the overthrow of all worldly states and governments: kings and princes being expressed in the prophetical style, by the name of sun, moon, and stars; (see note on xiii. 10.) and then by analogy, tributary princes, and other inferior rulers, will be meant by the *kings of the earth upon the earth*, as placed in a station below the former, and subject to their influence, as the lower world is to that of the heavenly constellations. (Compare x. 8.) Some commentators understand by the *host of the high ones which are on high*, the devil and his angels, who are described by St. Paul by the names of *principalities and powers*, dwelling *in high* or *heavenly places*, and having *power in the air*, or lower region of the world: (Ephes. ii. 2. vi. 12.) and then by the *kings of the earth* must be meant those earthly princes who are influenced by them, and are their instruments in abetting idolatry, or persecuting God's truth. The evil spirits are sometimes represented as part of the heavenly host, both with respect to their original dignity, and because they are the instruments of Providence, and have a command over the inferior world, as far as God thinks fit to permit. (See 1 Kings xxii. 19, &c. Job i. 6. Rev. xii. 7.) And in this sense some understand that contest between the angels, mentioned Dan. x. 13. as if it were between the good and bad angels.

Ver. 22. *And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered together in the pit*, (or dungeon: see li. 14, &c.)] The verse alludes to the custom of kings, who used to confine the chief commanders of their enemies whom they take prisoners, and reserve them to some extraordinary day of triumph, and then bring them out to public punishment. The word *visiting* is used for punishing, as well as for remembering with grace and favour. Thus this very phrase, *After many days thou shalt be visited*, is used, Ezek. xxxviii. 8. (See likewise Prov. xix. 23.) I cannot find any explication of this verse so agreeable to the natural sense of the words, as that of a late learned writer upon the Revelation; (xix. 6.) who explains it of the kings of the earth, who made war with Christ and his saints at Armageddon, (Rev. xvi. 16. xix. 19.) and being there discomfited, lay languishing under the sentence of condemnation till after the battle of Gog and Magog, (xx. 8—10.) when they were, together with Satan their leader, punished with everlasting destruction.

Ver. 23. *Then shall the moon be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion.*] If the expressions of the *moon's being confounded, and the sun ashamed*, be understood literally, the sense must be, that the sun and moon should be darkened and give no light; a circumstance that will certainly attend the last day. (See Joel iii. 15. Matt. xxiv. 29.) But I rather think the place to be parallel with lx. 19. and Rev. xxi. 23. where it is said, that when the kingdom of God shall come, his glory shall shine out so illustriously, that there shall be no need of the light of the sun and moon; upon which account they are represented here as *ashamed* and *confounded* to see their light eclipsed by a greater.

When the Lord shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.] We need not understand this and such-like expressions in a literal sense with the Jews, but are sufficiently warranted, by the authority of the New Testament, to explain them of the triumphant state of the church, when the saints shall reign with God and Christ in glory. (See Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. xxi. 2, 3. and the note upon ii. 2.)

And before his ancients.] Or, *in the presence of his ancients:* an allusion to the elders of Israel, and Moses, and their succeeding kings at the head of them, who were the governors and representatives of the whole nation. In like manner heaven is represented as the general assembly of the saints, with God and Christ at the head of them. (See Psal. lxxxix. 7. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. iv. 5. and vii. 9—11.) Part of this heavenly company are called by the name of *elders* or *ancients*, Rev. iv. 4. and elsewhere, particularly xix. 4. 6. where there is a plain allusion to this place.

CHAP. XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Some parts of the last chapter having a relation to the end of the world, we may, without breaking in upon the connexion of the prophecy, suppose the triumphant hymns, in this and the next chapter, principally to regard the same time, and to be of the same nature, with those recorded Rev. xi. 17. xv. 3. xix. 6.

Ver. 1. *THY counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*] What thou hast formerly decreed, thou dost in due time punctually fulfil.

Ver. 2. *For thou hast made of a city a heap.*] That is, of several cities, such as Babylon, Tyre, Samaria, and others, mentioned in the foregoing chapters. (Compare xxiv. 10. 12. and see the note on xxvi. 5. xxvii. 10.)

A palace of strangers.] By *strangers* are meant *heathens, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, as St. Paul calls

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them, and enemies to it: (see ver. 4, 5.) or, as a learned friend hath suggested to me, this appellation very properly belongs to Babylon, which was built for the strangers and sojourners, who before dwelt in tents, as wanderers in Arabia Deserta. (See the notes upon xxiii. 13.)

Ver. 3. *Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.*] The word *naz*, which is translated *strong*, does likewise signify *fierce*, and so it is rendered by our interpreters, xix. 4. and so it should be translated in Samson's riddle, Judg. xiv. 14. *Out of the fierce came forth sweetness.* I take this verse to be parallel to that of Psal. lxxvi. 10. *The fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise:* the humbling of these potent cities and terrible nations, or *terrible ones*, as they are called ver. 4, 5. will be a means of bringing them to give glory to God, and to acknowledge that the *Most High rules over the children of men.*

Ver. 4. *For thou hast been—a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat,* &c.] Compare iv. 6. xxxii. 2. This verse may be applied to the deliverance which God vouchsafed to the Jews from their formidable enemy Sennacherib: but I presume it may more fitly be expounded of the church's deliverance from the tyranny of mystical Babylon, (see xiv. 3, &c.) and the insults of all her enemies; when the saints shall sing the song of Moses, as those who are delivered out of a state of bondage and slavery. (See Rev. xv. 3.)

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place, even the heat with the shadow of a cloud.*] Lud. de Dieu hath translated the words more clearly thus, *The noise* [or tumult] *of strangers is as the heat in a dry place, thou shalt bring down* (or abate) *the heat with the shadow of a cloud:* the prophet compares the oppressions of those strangers and infidels to an excessive drought, which parcheth up every thing, ver. 4. and here he says, that God will overshadow his people, and protect them till this tyranny be overpast: our English translation adheres more strictly to that distinction of the sentences, which the Hebrew accents point out; but we do not find, that the ancient versions took any notice of those distinctions; and our own translation in some places neglects them, where the sense is clearer if we divide the sentences otherwise: indeed, the rabbins are not agreed what is the use of those accents, and therefore it seems a needless curiosity to lay any stress upon them.

The branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.] Some render *zemir*, the *rejoicing* of the terrible ones, &c.

Ver. 6. *And in this mountain.*] Called Mount Zion, xxiv. 23. (See the note there, and upon ii. 2.)

Shall the Lord of hosts make a feast of fat things, &c.] God's calling men by his grace, is often expressed in Scripture by the metaphor of inviting them to a feast: (see Prov. ix. 2. Matt. xxii. 4.) and the joys of heaven are described by the same metaphor, Luke xxii. 29. Rev. xix. 9. The same representation is used here, and implies that God will bestow his grace in a plentiful manner upon his people, and fill them with spiritual delights, when the Jews shall be converted, and the fulness of the gentiles shall come into the church. The words may likewise allude to those religious feasts which were kept at Jerusalem, when the Jews were commanded to *rejoice before the Lord.* (Deut. xii. 18. xiv. 26.)

Of fat things full of marrow.] An expression denoting the richest taste. (See Psal. lxiii. 5. Job xxxvi. 16.)

Of wines on the lees well refined.] Of wines that had been settled on the lees, and thereby enriched, and afterward drawn off for use.

Ver. 7. *And he will destroy—the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.*] *The face of the covering* is put for the *covering of the face*, by an hypallage usual in Scripture: the phrase may signify all tokens of mourning and sorrow, which were expressed by covering the face, or putting a veil upon it. (See note on xxii. 17.) If we take the words in this sense, they are equivalent to *wiping away the tears from off all faces*, in the following verse; or they may denote the taking away all ignorance and prejudice from men's minds, which St. Paul compares to a *veil*, (2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.) and the word *covering* is used in the same sense in this prophecy, (xxix. 10.) Mr. White is pleased to slight this interpretation, but I think it is every whit as proper a one as that which he produces out of Grotius, and he hath not thought fit to explain how *all people*, and *all the earth*, could be concerned in the terror which Sennacherib brought upon Jerusalem.

Ver. 8. *He will swallow up death in victory.*] Or, *for ever*, as the word *lanetsach* often signifies: St. Paul expounds this text of the general resurrection, and tells us it will not be *brought to pass* till then; (1 Cor. xv. 54.) whose authority, I think, ought to oblige every Christian to acquiesce in this interpretation: and they that strain their wits to find out some other meaning of the place, can offer nothing but what is forced and trifling.

And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.] This too is applied by St. John to the heavenly state, Rev. vii. 17. xxi. 4. and will never be made good till then.

And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth.] Or, *the reproach of his people*, as the phrase is translated, Micah vi. 16. That is, those reproaches which they endured under their several distresses and persecutions in divers parts of the world, which made their enemies scorn them, as persons despised and rejected by God himself. (Compare Psal. xlii. 10. Joel ii. 17.)

Ver. 10. *For in this mountain* [see ver. 6.] *shall the hand of the Lord rest.*] The church is called the place of God's rest, xi. 10. (see the note there); where his power in protecting his people shall visibly exert itself, as the words here import.

And Moab shall be trodden down under him, as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.] Or *in Madmenah*, as the margin reads, which was a city of Moab, (Jer. xlviii. 2.) Moab is put here for the enemies of the church in general. (See note on xi. 14.)

Ver. 11. *And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim.*] Some understand these words of Moab, and render them thus, *Although he spread forth his hands*, &c. that is, though he do all he can to save himself, as swimmers use their utmost skill when they are in danger of drowning, yet God *shall bring down his pride.* Others interpret the whole verse of God; that he should stretch forth his hands, and reach his enemies wherever they are. The expression, *in the midst of them*, or, *in the midst thereof*, as the Hebrew word signifies, favours the latter exposition.

Together with the spoils of their hands.] With the goods

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which they have unjustly taken from others to enrich themselves. Some render the words, *together with the strength of their hands.*

Ver. 12. *And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down.*] See xxvi. 5.

CHAP. XXVI.

See the Argument of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 1. *IN that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah.*] In the church, in which sense Mount Zion and Jerusalem are often used. (See note on xxiv. 23.)

We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.] The church is called the *city of God:* (see Psal. xlviii. 1. lxxxvii. 3. Heb. xii. 22.) and its strength consists in God's protection. (See Zech. ii. 5.) His salvation will supply the place of the strongest fortifications. (Compare lx. 18.)

Ver. 2. *Open ye the gates.*] The expression denotes the enlarging the number of believers, and bringing into the church *daily such as should be saved.* (Compare lx. 11. Rev. xxi. 25.) The prophet addresses himself to different persons in this song, and speaks sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural number, which is a grateful variety in poetry. (See the note upon lxiii. 1.)

That the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.] The Jews are styled *a holy nation,* Exod. xix. 6. which title more properly belongs to the Christian church, (2 Pet. ii. 9.) especially when it comes to be purged from its dross, and all the members of it to be righteous. (See lx. 21.)

Ver. 5. *He bringeth down them that dwell on high.*] God will subdue those that pride themselves in their worldly power and greatness, (see the note on ii. 11.) or trust in their castles and fortifications. (Compare xxv. 12.)

The lofty city, he layeth it low.] As the church is styled the city of God, so the society of infidels, or enemies to God's truth, is represented by the like similitude of a city, and typified under the figures of Sodom, Babylon, and that Jerusalem, which killed the prophets. (See Rev. xi. 8.) And this sense I think best agrees with the scope of the place, and with the parallel texts, xxxv. 2. 12. in neither of which places can the expression be understood of any one particular city.

Ver. 6. *The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.*] The planting of the gospel was a remarkable triumph over the power and wisdom of men, when "God chose the foolish things of the world, to confound the things which were wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things which were mighty:" accordingly, under every advancement of Christ's kingdom, the poor and humble, those who have despised the world, and have been despised by it, are to have a particular share in the glory and success thereof. (See xi. 4. and the notes there: xxix. 19. lxi. 1. Zeph. iii. 12.) If we understand the words of that last and great triumph of the church over antichrist and all its enemies (as many of the expressions in this and the former chapter look that way), we may fitly explain the *poor and needy* here, to be those who shall escape out of the great tribulation which shall precede those times, mentioned Dan. xii. 1. Rev. vii. 14.

Ver. 7. *Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.*] Or, *make plain the path of the just.* Thou, O God, who art the author of all goodness, dost direct his steps, and keep him from falling. (See Psal. xxxvii. 23, 24.) To this sense the verb *pilles* is used, Prov. iv. 26.

Ver. 8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.*] We have possessed our souls in patience under thy chastisements, (so *judgments* signify, ver. 9.) and have waited thy good time for our deliverance.

The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.] We desire and endeavour to stir up devout affections in our souls towards thee, to possess our minds with due apprehensions of the greatness of thy majesty, and the dependance we ought to have upon thy promises.

Ver. 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.*] And these devout affections we stir up within us, both late at night and early in the morning, when others give themselves up to sleep and drowsiness. (Compare Psal. v. 3. lxiii. 6. cxix. 55. 62. 147. cxxx. 6.)

For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.] The afflictions thou sendest have this good effect upon all but hardened sinners (see the following verse), that they engage men to seek God, and turn to him whom they have offended.

Ver. 10. *In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.*] Though he lives among those who are remarkable for the regularity of their behaviour, among the people of God, or the *righteous nation,* mentioned ver. 2. yet will he not be prevailed upon by their example, or the many demonstrations God hath given of his power and providence. (See ver. 11.)

Ver. 11. *But they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people.*] They shall at last be forced to give God the glory, and take shame upon themselves for the envy and hatred they have shewed towards God's people. Some render the words thus, *They shall see thy zeal for the people, and be ashamed:* they shall be seized with confusion, when they see what a care and concern God hath for his people, and how visibly he exerts his power in protecting them, and punishing their adversaries. In this sense the Hebrew word *kinah* is used in other places. (See lxiii. 15. Zech. i. 14. viii. 2.)

Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.] The Divine vengeance, which shall consume God's enemies like fire. (See Deut. iv. 24. xxxii. 22. Heb. x. 27.)

Ver. 12. *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.*] All the mercies and deliverances we have hitherto enjoyed, proceed only from thee; which encourageth us to trust in thee for a happy issue out of all our troubles.

Ver. 13. *O Lord our God, other lords have had dominion over us,* &c.] Meaning the Assyrians, Babylonians, and all the oppressors of God's church in aftertimes: (compare 2 Chron. xii. 8.) but it is by thee only that we have been delivered out of their hands, and therefore upon thee alone will we call as our God and Saviour.

Ver. 14. *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise.*] These oppressors of God's people shall never rise again, but *to shame and everlasting contempt,* as it is said, Dan. xii. 2. whereas thy *dead shall*

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live and rise again: see ver. 19. of this chapter. The prophet sees the destruction of the wicked by faith, and speaks of it as a thing already done, (see note on xxi. 9.) though it be not yet brought to pass. (Compare ver. 19. 21.)

Therefore thou hast visited and destroyed them.] Or rather, *because thou hast visited*, &c. So the particle *lahen* is used, Numb. x. 31. xiv. 43.

Ver. 15. *Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord,—— thou hast removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.*] Thou hast spread or enlarged the church, called the *righteous nation*, ver. 2. (Compare ix. 3.) Here too the expressions are in the preter-perfect tense, as in the foregoing verse; but the words will be signally verified, when all God's *enemies shall be made his footstool, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ*, (Rev. xi. 15.)

Ver. 16. *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee.*] Or, *remembered thee:* this and the two following verses represent the sense of God's people under their afflictions.

Ver. 17. *Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her travail is in pain*, &c.] A comparison often used to express men's consternation under public calamities. (See xiii. 8. Psal. xlviii. 6. Jer. iv. 31. vi. 24. xxx. 6. Hos. xiii. 13.)

Ver. 18. *We have as it were brought forth wind, we have not brought any deliverance in the earth.*] The latter part of the sentence explains the former: We have had no good issue, saith the prophet, of all our pangs and throes; they did not produce ease and deliverance, as in the case of travailing women, but all our own labours proved abortive; in vain we struggled with our enemies, who are still too mighty for us, and it is from God alone we must expect our deliverance. *To bring forth wind*, is much the same phrase with *feeding upon wind*, and *reaping wind*, (Hos. viii. 7. xii. 1.) and signifies to take a great deal of pains to no purpose.

Neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.] By our means: the *inhabitants of the world* mean the same as the *men of the world*, Psal. xvii. 14. The *world* is often taken for the wicked, who make the greatest part of the world, and have the greatest share in it. See John vii. 7. xii. 31. xv. 18. xvi. 8. xvii. 14. 16. 25.

Ver. 19. *Thy dead men shall live.*] This and the following verses contain God's answer to the former complaints of his people: wherein he promiseth them a revival, or new life, after all their miseries, which had brought them to death's door. The restoration of the Jews, whether after the Babylonish captivity, or after their dispersions in following times, is represented as a rising again from the dead by Ezekiel, xxxvii. 1, &c. And perhaps this verse may in its primary sense mean no more; especially if the last sentence of it, which our English renders, *and the earth shall cast out the dead*, be thus translated, *but thou wilt cast down the land of the oppressors;* which sense is followed by the Septuagint: the word *rephaim*, which is translated *the dead* in our English version, both here and in the fourteenth verse, signifies originally *giants*, and from thence is applied to wicked men or oppressors. But I doubt not but this verse was one of those texts upon which the ancient Jews grounded their belief of the resurrection, the hope of which was founded upon the writings of *the law and the prophets*, as St. Paul tells them, Acts xxiv. 14. And the Jews from ancient times have used the words of a text parallel to this, lxvi. 14. as a form over a person interred, at the same time throwing grass into the grave, as in some places with us they do rosemary, to testify their belief of a resurrection: and this is what the true and genuine sense of the words plainly imports.

Together with my dead body shall they arise.] The Hebrew runs thus, *my dead body* [or bodies] *shall arise:* the noun is in the singular number, and the verb in the plural; so the singular is taken distributively for every dead body; just as it is Psal. xii. 7. "Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve him from this generation for ever:" where the word *him* is taken for *every one of them*, as the sense is explained in the margin. These two sentences, *thy dead men shall live*, and *my dead bodies shall arise*, are equivalent; they are called the *church's dead* in the former sentence, as being members of that mystical body, and *God's* or *Christ's dead* in the latter sentence, from the interest he hath in them, and because he hath promised to raise them up at the last day. (See John vi. 39.)

Ver. 20. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee.*] The words are an allusion to that command given to the Israelites in Egypt, *not to go out of the doors of their houses till morning*, when the destroying angel was to pass through the land of Egypt, (Exod. xii. 22, 23.) So God here promises to be a hiding-place to his people in the midst of those terrible judgments which should destroy his adversaries: this probably may be meant of those days of extraordinary trouble at the end of the world, spoken of Dan. xii. 1. Matt. xxiv. 21. in which many of the righteous should be saved, *but so as by fire; i.e.* by passing through a fiery trial; but the wicked should be finally destroyed; (2 Pet. iii. 7.) Whereupon the righteous are described as *coming out of great tribulation*, Rev. vii. 14. (See notes on ver. 6. of this chapter, and iv. 2. 4. and compare xxiv. 13, 14.)

Ver. 21. *For behold the Lord cometh out of his place.*] God is elsewhere described as coming down from heaven to judgment, because of the visible effects of his power and presence upon earth. (See Micah i. 3.)

To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.] These are called *the inhabitants of the world*, ver. 18. (See the note there.) These expressions, especially when compared with the context, must be of a larger extent, than barely to signify the Assyrian army destroyed before Jerusalem, (xxxvii. 36.) as Grotius and some others would confine the sense of the words.

The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.] The number of the slain shall be so great, that the earth can neither give them burial, nor soak up their blood. (Compare xxxiv. 3. lxvi. 16. Rev. xiv. 20.)

CHAP. XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter treats of the same subject with the two former, and describes that happy state of the church, when Satan and his agents shall be subdued, the church shall be enlarged and purged from idolatry, and the Jews shall be restored: all which are circumstances attending those glorious days, which the prophets often foretell shall come to pass at or near the end of the world.

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Ver. 1. *IN that day the Lord, with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan.*] Tyrants and oppressors are often resembled to whales and other sea monsters, which devour the lesser fry: thus Pharaoh is called the *leviathan*, and the *dragon* or whale *in the waters;* (Psal. lxxiv. 13, 14. Isa. li. 9. Ezek. xxix. 3.) and so the expressions of this verse denote in general those worldly potentates, who have been the noted oppressors of God's people, and are, indeed, the instruments and types of Satan, so often called the *serpent* in Scripture, to whom some interpreters apply the expressions here. (See the following note.)

The piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.] The Hebrew word *beriah*, which our English translates *piercing*, is rendered in the margin *crossing; i. e.* having his mouth run out in length *like a bar:* it signifies likewise *running away*, and so it is rendered here by the Septuagint. But in Job xxvi. 13. where the same phrase occurs, they render it Δράκοντα τὸν Ἀποστάτην, *the apostate dragon*, as if they understood it of the devil. The word serpent is sometimes taken for a water animal: (see Amos ix. 13.) in which sense it is used here, and ranked with *leviathan*, and the *dragon* or whale *that is in the sea.* The word *tannin* signifies any great fish, such as a whale, and so is plainly taken Gen. i. 21. and Psal. cxlviii. 7. *Praise the Lord ye whales* (not dragons) *and all deeps.* Bochart thinks it sometimes signifies a *crocodile*, particularly Ezek. xxix. 3. xxxii. 2. The word is very fitly rendered *sea-monsters*, by our translators, Lam. iv. 3.

Ver. 2, 3. *In that day, sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I, the Lord, do keep it,* &c.] The church is often compared to a vineyard; (see v. 1. Jer. ii. 21. Matt. xxi. 33.) and red wine was esteemed the best and most generous sort of wine. (See Prov. xxiii. 31.) The import of these two verses is, That when the enemies of God's people are destroyed, among other songs and thanksgivings to God, this acknowledgment shall be made to the praise of God, and of the church which he protects, that as she is fruitful in all good works, so God continually watches over her and defends her from danger. (Compare Psal. lxxx. 8. 13.)

Ver. 4. *Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle,* &c.] These are still the words of God, who speaks to this purpose; Though fury doth not belong to me, and vengeance be called my *strange work:* (xxviii. 21.) yet if the briers and thorns, *i. e.* the wicked and incorrigible, bid defiance to me, they will find I shall soon destroy and consume them like fire; an instance of which I have given in the judgments mentioned xxvi. 21. xxvii. 1. By *briers* and *thorns* are meant *sinners.* (See note on ix. 18.)

Ver. 5. *Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me,* &c.] Or rather, let such a one return to me, and make his peace with me, who am a sure refuge and strength to all that fly to me for succour. (See xxv. 4.)

Ver. 6. *He shall cause them that come of Jacob, to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud.*] Compare xxxvii. 31. Hos. xiv. 5, 6. The words may be rendered, *In times to come he shall cause Jacob to take root.*

And fill the face of the world with fruit.] Compare iv. 2. These, and the foregoing words, are a description of the flourishing state of the Jews after their conversion, which shall be as new *life from the dead*, as St. Paul expresses it, (Rom. xi. 15.) and shall occasion the fulness of the gentiles coming into the church. All that Mr. White will have to be meant by these expressions is, *that the Jews, after Sennacherib's overthrow, shall flourish again, and grow populous.* The sense, he owns, must make the expressions very hyperbolical, or else his interpretation will hardly pass for a literal one.

Ver. 7. *Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him?*] *Him*, that is, Israel: God never makes an utter destruction of his people, but always preserveth a remnant: (see note on i. 9.) whereas his enemies he threatens with utter destruction, and oftentimes puts the sentence in execution, as in the case of Amalek, (Exod. xvii. 14. Numb. xxiv. 20. 1 Sam. xv. 3.)

Ver. 8. *In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it.*] The execution of God's judgments is expressed by God's *having a controversy with his people*, (Hos. iv. 1. Micah vi. 2.) which yet will be *in measure*, or with moderation, as the prophet here speaks. Some expositors think that the word *beshallekah*, which our English renders, *when it shooteth forth*, is a metaphor taken from the art of pruning, as if the prophet had said, God will cut off the superfluous branches, but spare the main body of the tree. Grotius renders the word, *when thou sendest* [the people] *into captivity;* and explains it, That God would not utterly destroy them in a foreign land, but preserve a remnant to return, and repossess their native country.

He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.] That is, in the midst of judgment he remembers mercy. The *east wind* may allude to the *shooting forth* of the branches, mentioned in the foregoing words; that wind being very prejudicial to tender shoots. The east wind being a dry blasting wind, elsewhere signifies the calamities of war, and such-like wasting judgments. (See Jer. iv. 11. Ezek. xvii. 10. xix. 12. Hos. xiii. 15.)

Ver. 9. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin* [or, of taking away his sin]; *when he makes all the stones of the altar as chalk-stones that are beaten asunder.*] This shall be the most remarkable effect of that reformation, which God's chastisements shall produce; *viz.* the abolishing of all the monuments of idolatry, such as altars, groves, and images. (See xvii. 8.) The word *altar*, in the singular number, is taken distributively, for any altar, concerning which phrase, see the note on xxvi. 19. These altar-stones, the prophet saith, shall be beaten to dust like chalk-stones, in order to the abolishing the very memory of idolatrous worship. So Moses ground the golden calf to powder, (see Exod. xxxii. 20. Deut. ix. 21.) and Asa stamped his mother's idol to pieces, (2 Chron. xv. 16.) It hath been already observed, that when the prophets speak of an entire reformation, they always mention the utter abolishing of idolatry, especially out of the church, as if that were one of the last enemies of God's truth that should be destroyed. (See the note on i. 29.)

The groves and images shall not stand up.] Or, *so that the groves and images may not rise again.* The Hebrew language wants the potential or subjunctive mood, which is often supplied by the future tense. (See a like instance, vii. 25.

Ver. 10. *Yet the defenced city shall be forsaken,* &c.] The

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prophet mixes threatenings with the promises, as is usual elsewhere, and tells the Jews, that before these happy days come, great calamities should befal them: Jerusalem and the rest of their fortified cities should be desolate. *City* is here taken for cities in general. (See the verse foregoing, and the notes upon xxv. 2.)

There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down.] Desolate places naturally turn to pasturage: so these and the like expressions are used to signify an entire desolation. (Compare vii. 25. xvii. 2. xxxii. 14.)

Ver. 11. *When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come and set them on fire.*] The prophet continues to describe the places where cities stood, as turned into fields, where the fences are broke down, and the withered branches of the trees gathered by women to make a fire: so should the whole country of Judea be exposed to the ravage and spoil of the weakest and most contemptible enemy. (Compare iii. 12.) Thus the fall of the Assyrian is represented by the lopping of a great tree, and breaking off its boughs, Ezek. xxxi. 12, 13. and the destruction of sinners is often compared to the burning of the dead branches. (See Matt. iii. 10. John xv. 6.)

For it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, &c.] These calamities are owing to their own stupidity and wilful blindness. (See i. 3. vi. 10. Deut. xxxii. 28.)

Ver. 12. *And it shall come to pass in that day.*] At the time mentioned ver. 2. The prophet returns to his former subject, the two last verses being in the nature of a parenthesis.

That the Lord shall beat off.] The metaphor is taken from thrashing, or separating the pure grain from the chaff: so shall God sever his saints from the hypocrites, in order to the restoring the righteous from their several dispersions, and destroying the wicked. This relates to the restoration of the Jews in the latter times. (Consider and compare Ezek. xx. 34. 38. 40. Amos ix. 8, 9.)

From the channel of the river to the stream of Egypt.] From the river Euphrates, which is upon the border of Assyria, to the river Nile, which is the boundary of Egypt. (See the following verse.) This expression denotes the several dispersions of the Jews, these two countries being the places into which the greatest part of them were dispersed. (See the note on xi. 16.)

[*To the stream of Egypt.*] The river of Egypt is to be distinguished from the Nile; it riseth out of Mount Paran, and takes it course *towards Rhinocorura* (so the LXX. translate it here, ἕως ῥινοκορουρῶν); and from thence falls into the Mediterranean Sea. See Gen. xv. 18. Josh. xv. 47. 1 Kings viii. 65.]

And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.] Each man of you, none of you shall be left behind, or neglected. (See the note on liv. 7.)

Ver. 13. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown.*] A general alarm or summons shall be given: compare Matt. xxiv. 31. which place some understand of this very restoration of the Jews the prophet here speaks of. The expression is taken from the use of trumpets under the law, which was to assemble the congregation together: (see Numb. x. 22. Jer. iv. 5. Joel ii. 15.) or it may allude to the *loud voice* of the trumpet which summoned all Israel at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. 19.)

And shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.] They shall be joined to the true worshippers of God, and serve him in his church. (Compare ii. 3. xi. 9. xxiv. 23. xxv. 6, 7. 10. and see the note on xix. 19.)

CHAP. XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

According to the division I proposed at the beginning of the book, here begins the fourth part or section of this prophecy, which chiefly relates to Sennacherib's invasion, and is concluded with a history of that affair, in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters, which is placed there as a key to explain several of the foregoing prophecies. I observed upon i. 1. That the prophecies are not always recorded in that order of time in which they were published; so the beginning of this chapter denounces God's judgments against the ten tribes, who were carried away captive some years before several of the foregoing prophecies were delivered. In the seventh and following verses, the prophet severely reproves the two other tribes for their excess, their ignorance, and their contempt of those threatenings he had denounced against their sins, and which they fondly presumed that they could by their cunning and management evade and escape: but he tells them they would find themselves very much mistaken.

Ver. 1. *WOE to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim.*] Woe to that proud kingdom of Israel, (compare Jer. xiii. 18. Lam. v. 16.) of which Ephraim is the head; Samaria the royal seat of that kingdom being situate in that tribe. (See note on vii. 2.)

[*The drunkards of Ephraim.*] From whence Sichem, situate in that tribe, was called, by way of reproach, Sychar; *i. e.* the city of *drunkards*. See John iv. 5.]

Whose glorious beauty is as a fading flower.] Whose state and pride should be of a very short continuance, like the beauty of a flower, which soon fades and withers. (See ver. 4.)

Which are in the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine.] Samaria was built on a hill: (see 1 Kings xvi. 24.) having a very rich valley under it.

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm.*] Under these resemblances the prophet represents Shalmaneser the king of Assyria, who should carry the ten tribes away captive, and make an utter destruction of that kingdom: God's severe judgments are often set forth under the emblems of storms and tempests, which are the artillery of heaven. (See xxix. 6. xxx. 30. Ezek. xiii. 11. Rev. xvi. 21.)

Shall cast down to the earth with the hand.] That is, with great force, as when an earthen vessel is dashed to pieces against the ground.

Ver. 4. *As the hasty fruit before the summer; which, when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.*] Or, *As the first ripe fruit* [which comes] *before the other summer-fruits;* for so the word *kaits* often signifies, and is translated so by our interpreters, xvi. 9. of this prophecy, Jer. xl. 10. 12. xlviii. 32. Amos viii. 1, 2. The Hebrew *biccurah* properly signifies the first ripe fruits, and is here translated by the Septuagint, in

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conjunction with *kaits*, Πρόδρομος σύκον, the *first ripe fig*, the Greek word Πρόδρομος being a term used by those who write about trees and fruit, for the first ripe figs, as Athenæus shews out of Dioscorides, Deipnosophist, lib. iii. and Pliny Nat. Hist. lib. xvi. cap. 26. and Hesychius explains Πρόδρομα, by Προακμάζοντα σῦκα, where the printed copies corruptly read Πρόδρομα. Most people are very fond of early ripe fruit, and devour it greedily. (See Hos. ix. 10.) So shall the Assyrians serve the Israelites.

Ver. 5. *In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, to the residue of his people.*] God will then be the glory and protection of the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin; he will raise up king Hezekiah for their defence, and signally protect him against his enemies.

Ver. 6. *And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment.*] The same God will direct the king, when he sits upon the judgment-seat, to administer justice impartially to all his subjects. (Compare Prov. xx. 8.)

And for strength to them that turn the battle from the gate.] Or, *That return the battle to the gate;* that turn it back upon their enemies, and pursue them to the gates of their own cities. (See 1 Sam. xvii. 52.)

Ver. 7. *But they also have erred through wine—the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink,* &c.] The sins of excess are as notorious among the remaining two tribes, as they were in those that are carried away captive: and even among the priests and prophets, persons more immediately dedicated to God's service; although the priests were forbidden so much as to drink wine, during the time of their ministration, that they might more exactly determine *between* what is *holy and unholy*, and *between clean and unclean*, (Lev. x. 9.)

Ver. 9. *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*] The prophet here, as elsewhere, upbraids the people's profound ignorance and careless neglect of instructions. (See vi. 9, 10. xxix. 10, 11.) If the teachers, saith he, were never so well qualified to instruct, there are none that will learn: they that are grown to years of discretion, are but children in respect of religious knowledge, and it is to as little purpose to undertake the instructing of this people, as it would be to teach infants that are but just weaned.

Ver. 10. *For precept must be upon precept—line upon line—here a little, and there a little.*] You must frame your instructions, as if you were to deal with children, repeat the same thing over and over again, and instil good principles into them by easy and gentle degrees, as they are able to bear it.

Ver. 11. *For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people.*] The first word, or particle, *ki*, were better rendered *therefore*, which interpretation gives the words this turn: God hath dealt with this people as with children; and as nurses teach them to speak by lisping and stammering like them; so he hath condescended to the lowest rudiments of instruction, and hath *fed them with milk, and not with strong meat.* But since all this is to no purpose, *therefore* now he will take a new course with them; he will send other sorts of stammerers among them, *viz.* the Assyrians and Chaldeans, whose language they understand not, and they shall instruct them by blows and corrections. This is a great aggravation of the miseries that attend a foreign conquest, that there is no parleying or treating with such a conqueror, nor any moving him to compassion, because they understand not each other's language: accordingly this is threatened as one of the sorest judgments God can send upon a people, (Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15.) That this is the true meaning of this verse, appears by St. Paul's applying of it to the speaking in an unknown tongue, (1 Cor. xiv. 21, 22.) and by the use of the Hebrew *lanag*, translated *stammering*, which is applied to a foreign language, xxxiii. 19. (See the note upon that place.)

Ver. 12. *To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*] God often admonished this people by his prophets, that his word, and the promises of it, were the only thing that could give true comfort to those that were under any pressure or trouble: (see l. 4. Matt. xi. 28.) but they would not hearken to his advice.

Ver. 13. *But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept,* &c.] This should be joined to the foregoing sentence, and the beginning of the verse rendered, *Although the word of the Lord,* &c. They would not hearken, though God spake never so plainly, and often renewed the same message by his prophets.

That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.] That is, that in their goings they might fall backwards, &c. This refractoriness of theirs will, in the event, prove their utter ruin: it will be the cause of those calamities, which will end in their being carried captive to Babylon, and it will occasion their utter rejection under the times of the gospel. (Compare vi. 11, 12. viii. 14.) St. Peter, alluding to this place, saith, that God's word is a *stone of stumbling to the disobedient*, (1 Pet. ii. 8.) and it is *appointed* or decreed by God, that they, who will not accept of the offers of grace, should be ruined by rejecting them. (See Matt. xxi. 44. and the notes on viii. 14.)

Ver. 14. *Ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.*] The rulers and chief magistrates are here reproved as men that despised God's words and threatenings, and trusted wholly to the art of worldly policy. (See ver. 22. and compare i. 10.)

Ver. 15. *Because ye say, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement.*] We have made peace, say they, with those that threaten to destroy us, (meaning, probably, Sennacherib and his forces: see note on viii. 12.) So that we need not fear any of those evils from them, with which you threaten us. The phrase of *making a covenant with death*, is best explained from Hos. ii. 18. where God's *making a covenant for the Jews with the beasts of the field*, is the same with giving them assurance that the beasts shall not hurt them. *Hell*, or the *grave*, and *death*, are often joined together as equivalent. (See Psal. lv. 15. and the notes on xiv. 9.)

When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come to us.] Though a general calamity should go through the land, yet we shall escape; the expression is metaphorical, and taken from storms or inundations, that carry all before them. (See viii. 8. Dan. xi. 22.)

For we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.] Our arts of cunning and falsehood will secure us in the most difficult times. They are not

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supposed to have said thus much in express terms, but this was their true meaning. (See the note on xxx. 10.)

Ver. 16. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone,* &c.] This prophecy cannot belong to any but Christ, to whom it is often applied in the New Testament. But it may import thus much, with respect to the time wherein Isaiah lived, that he should never be disappointed, who believes in God, whose dwelling is in Zion, and hath made peculiar promises to the Jewish church and kingdom seated there, which shall eminently be fulfilled at the coming of the Messias, in whom all God's promises made to his people shall receive their final accomplishment.

He that believeth shall not make haste.] He that believes God's promises made to his faithful servants, will patiently depend upon God, and not out of distrust of his mercy betake himself to any unlawful means of securing himself, as many did, (ver. 15.) The Septuagint, instead of *shall not make haste,* read, *shall not be ashamed,* which makes some think that they read *jabish,* in the Hebrew, instead of *jackhish,* which is the reading of the present Hebrew copies. But our learned Dr. Pocock has shewed, that the verb *chush* still signifies to be *ashamed* in the Arabic tongue; which makes it probable, that it was formerly used in the same sense in the Hebrew. (See his Miscellaneous Notes in Portam Mosis, cap. 1. p. 10.) In the same sense the verb *chush* is probably taken, Job xx. 2. where our English renders the place, *For this I make haste;* but the sense would run much better if it were translated, *For this I am troubled or confounded.* Capellus, who would fain suspect the present reading of the Hebrew copy, did not consider that the copies in the son of Sirach's time, read as ours do now, as appears from those words of his, (Ecclus. ii. 2.) *Make not haste in the time of trouble;* which sentence certainly alludes to this text, taking the Hebrew *chush* in its usual signification.

Ver. 17. *Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.*] The prophet carries on the metaphor of building, and tells those scorners, that God would square his actions by the severest rules of justice, as they should find to their cost.

And the hail shall sweep away the refuge and lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.] God's judgments, like a storm of rain and hail, (see ver. 2. 15.) shall destroy all that security in which you place your confidence.

Ver. 18. *And your covenant with death shall be disannulled,* &c.] See ver. 15.

Ver. 19. *From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you,* &c.] The prophet still persists in the metaphor of an inundation, which seizes immediately without giving any warning, and carries all before it without intermission.

And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.] The words may be better translated thus, *And nothing but vexation can make you understand* (or lay to heart) *this instruction.* You will not believe what I say till the event verifies my words. The Hebrew word *shemunah,* which our English renders *report,* signifies *instruction,* in the ninth verse of this chapter. And the verb *bûn,* signifies not only to *understand,* but likewise to *consider* and lay to heart, in which sense it is used, xl. 21. (See the note there.) So likewise, Psal. cxix. 95. where our translation renders it, *I will consider thy testimonies;* again, Psal. cvi. 7. where our last translation reads, *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt,* the old translation expresses the sense better by *Our fathers regarded not thy wonders,* &c. In like manner, the verb *ijadang,* to *know,* signifies to *consider,* xliii. 25. of this prophecy. The Greek word, Συνίημι, is taken in the same sense, Matt. xiii. 19. *When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and considers it not,* or layeth it not to heart; for so it should be translated.

Ver. 20. *For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.*] Two proverbial expressions, importing that all worldly comforts are insufficient to cure the maladies they are applied to, and that human devices are too short to secure us against the hand of Providence, whenever that will find us out to punish us. And therefore we ought not to rely too much on outward means, much less betake ourselves to evil arts for our security, but commit ourselves to God in well-doing, as the surest refuge in the time of trouble.

And the covering narrower.] An allusion to the *covering of falsehood,* mentioned ver. 15. 17.

Ver. 21. *For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim.*] See 2 Sam. v. 20. The destruction of the Philistines is there compared to a *breach of waters:* the same resemblance which is here used, ver. 19.

That he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.] Those extraordinary manifestations of God's power at Perazim and Gibeon were for the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of their enemies: but now God will act contrary to his usual proceedings of grace and mercy, and employ his power in destroying his own people.

Ver. 22. *Now therefore be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.*] Do not despise God's threatenings: (see ver. 14.) or else this incorrigible temper will be a means of bringing you under a foreign yoke. (Compare lii. 2. Jer. xxvii. 2.)

For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.] Or rather, the *whole land.* (See x. 23.) The prophet had, in the beginning of the chapter, foretold the destruction of the ten tribes; and here he denounceth the like judgment upon the two tribes remaining.

Ver. 23. *Give ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.*] The design of the ensuing parable is to shew, that as a husbandman hath his set times and methods of manuring the ground, and ordering his grain when it is brought into the barn: so God hath his seasons of mercy and judgment; and even in inflicting judgments he deals in different measures with the righteous and the wicked: he chastiseth the former in order to his amendment, and punishes the latter to his utter destruction.

Ver. 24. *Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?*] Or, as the words may better be rendered, *Doth the ploughman plough every day to sow? Doth he* [every day] *open and break the clods of his ground?* Is there not a time for harrowing and sowing too? which are described in the following verse.

Ver. 26. *For his God doth instruct him,* &c.] The art of husbandry is so necessary for the support of human life, that all men have ascribed its original to God, as the in-

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ventor or ordainer of it. *The Most High hath created husbandry,* saith the son of Sirach, Ecclus. vii. 15. In like manner, Virgil, Georg. lib. i.

——"Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
Movit agros"——

By other heathens, the invention of agriculture is ascribed to the goddess Ceres.

Ver. 27. *Neither is there a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin.*] See note on xxi. 10.

Ver. 28. *Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not ever be thrashing it,* &c.] Bread-corn is bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, and so made flour, because the thrashing instruments are not proper for that purpose. The Hebrew reads, *Bread is bruised;* but bread is sometimes taken in that language for the corn that makes it. (See xxx. 23.)

[*Bread-corn is bruised.*] Gataker, in his Cinuus, p. 183. translates the words thus; Neither *is bread-corn bruised;* supplying the negative particle from the foregoing verse, *i. e.* it is not bruised into meal by thrashing, but beat in a mortar, or ground in a mill, for that purpose.]

Nor bruise it with his horsemen.] Or rather, *with his horses.* (See note on xxi. 9.) In the eastern countries they beat their wheat out of the husk, by drawing drays or heavy planks with iron wheels over it, as hath been observed on xxi. 10. To draw these they used horses, and sometimes oxen, as appears by that law of Moses, which forbids the *muzzling of the ox when he treads out the corn,* (Deut. xxv. 4.) Some explain the word *parashim,* which is here translated *horsemen,* of the spokes or teeth of those iron wheels.

Ver. 29. *This also cometh from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.*] This judgment, or *consumption,* threatened *upon the whole land,* (ver. 22.) cometh from God, whose decrees are the results of infinite wisdom, and who brings them to pass in such a manner, as doth best promote his own glory.

CHAP. XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This and the four following chapters have an immediate aspect upon Sennacherib's invasion. In the beginning of this chapter the prophet describes the terribleness of that siege, and withal how suddenly it should be raised, and the enemy's hopes disappointed. He then proceeds to upbraid the Jews for their hypocrisy and stupidity in *not discerning the signs of the times,* as our Saviour speaks, (Matt. xvi. 3.) nor observing the hand of Providence, evidently shewing itself both in mercies and judgments, which circumstances are very applicable to the time of our Saviour's preaching among them. He then foretells better times, with respect to those who are piously disposed, and concludes with such promises of grace and favour to the *meek* and *humble,* as plainly relate to the times of the gospel.

Ver. 1. *WOE to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!*] *Ariel* signifies the lion of God, and was the name of the altar, because it devoured the sacrifices which were offered upon it. (See Ezek. xliii. 15.) Here it is, by a synecdoche, put for the city of Jerusalem, which David made the seat of the kingdom, and where God, for David's sake, promised to place his name. (See 1 Kings xv. 4.) And yet, for the people's sins, God was now resolved to expose it to the assaults of Sennacherib and his army. Some render the latter part of the sentence thus, *The city which David besieged,* (in which sense of the verb *chanah* is taken ver. 3.) implying, that the enemy should distress it in the same manner.

Add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.] The former part of the sentence may be better translated to this sense, *Add ye one year to another:* as if the prophet had said, For two years you may have liberty to come and offer your sacrifices at the temple, but afterward the city will be so closely besieged, that there will be no admittance for any that live in the country to attend upon the public worship of God at the solemn festivals. Then another sort of sacrifices will be offered; concerning which see the following note.

Ver. 2. *Yet I will distress Ariel—and it shall be unto me as Ariel.*] When the city is closely besieged and distressed, it shall resemble the altar of burnt-offerings, being every way surrounded with carcasses, not of beasts, but of men. The slaughter of men is sometimes called a sacrifice, because it makes some kind of satisfaction and atonement to the justice of God. (See xxxiv. 6. Ezek. xxxix. 17. Zeph. i. 7.)

Ver. 3. *And I will encamp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee,* &c.] Mr. White very well observes, that this verse must be understood of the army under Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria *sent with a great host against Jerusalem,* (2 Kings xviii. 17. xix. 8, 9.) intending himself to follow in person, and have the honour of taking the city: but, upon the defeat of that army by a stroke from heaven, he returned homeward without ever making any approach to the city by way of assault. (See xxxvii. 33, 34. 37.)

Ver. 4. *And thou shalt be brought down, and thou shalt speak out of the ground,* &c.] Thou shalt be very humble, and thy king Hezekiah shall send ambassadors to bespeak the favour of the king of Assyria in very submissive terms. (See 2 Kings xviii. 14.)

And thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit.] See note on viii. 19.

Ver. 5. *Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff,* &c.] *Strangers* and *terrible ones* are joined here together, as they are xxv. 4. Here they signify the Assyrian army, which, though they made such a dreadful appearance, the prophet foretells they shall be defeated by a sudden stroke from heaven, and vanish in an instant; one hundred and eighty-five thousand being destroyed in one night, xxxvii. 36. (Compare xvii. 13.)

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake.*] The prophet, applying himself to Jerusalem, calls the army which besieged it, *Thy army,* ver. 5. and by the same figure we may understand the words here, *Thou shalt be visited,* of the same army, to which he threatens utter destruction in this and the following verses, and that from the immediate hand of God. (See the notes on xxviii. 2. and compare xxx. 30. Psal. xviii. 13, 14.) Some render the beginning of the sentence thus, *It*

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shall be visited; and explain the words of the *multitude of strangers,* mentioned ver. 5. but the rules of syntax will hardly allow that construction, because the verb taken in the third person will be of the feminine gender, and that noun is of the masculine.

Ver. 7. *And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel—shall be as a dream of a night vision.*] Shall vanish away as a dream doth when one awaketh, (Psal. lxxiii. 20. John xx. 8.)

Ver. 8. *It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty,* &c.] The Assyrians had swallowed up Jerusalem in their imagination, but God should suddenly disappoint all their hopes, and send them away empty and confounded.

Ver. 9. *Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine,* &c.] The prophet often upbraids the Jews with their carelessness and stupidity, never minding the indications of Providence, nor laying to heart the instructions of the prophets. (See note on xxviii. 9.) In this verse he applies himself to his auditors, and bids them reflect a little, and wonders to see how unconcerned the generality of people are at what is spoken to them from the mouth of God. You will, saith he, be forced to cry out; these men have lost their sense and reason, like those who are overcome with intoxicating liquors. The words which our English translates, *Cry ye out, and cry,* may perhaps be better rendered, *Consider ye, and cry out;* so some interpreters render that word in another form, xli. 23.

Ver. 10. *For the Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep.*] The word *spirit* is often taken for temper and disposition; in which sense we find the *spirit of heaviness,* lxi. 3. and the *spirit of meekness,* 1 Cor. iv. 21. and here the *spirit of sleepiness,* or drowsiness, is the same with a careless unthinking temper or disposition. In what sense God may be said to infuse such a temper into men, or how far he may contribute to the blinding of their eyes, or hardening their hearts, and how this and such-like prophecies were eminently accomplished at the first preaching of the gospel, hath been explained in the notes upon vi. 10, 11.

The prophets and your rulers, the seers, hath he covered.] That is, covered the eyes of their understanding, brought *night upon them, and made the sun go down over the prophets,* as we read Micah iii. 6. The prophets had great authority over the people by virtue of their office, which made so many pretenders to that sacred function: *seers* and *prophets* are equivalent expressions. (See xxx. 9. 1 Sam. ix. 9.)

Ver. 11. *And the vision of all* [or every vision] *is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed.*] One use of *sealing,* especially when applied to a book, is to close it up, or keep it from common view. To this purpose we read, (Dan. xii. 4.) *Shut up the words, and seal the book.* So the book mentioned Rev. v. 1. is described as *sealed with seven seals, which none but the Lamb could open;* that is, unfold or explain, (ver. 5.) See likewise viii. 16. of this prophecy.

Which men deliver to one that is learned, &c.] Prejudice doth as much hinder the learned from understanding God's word, as ignorance doth the unlearned.

Ver. 13. *Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth—but have removed their heart far from me,* &c.] One fatal mistake of the Jews, and that which led them into many others, was, that they confined the whole business of religion to the external worship of God, such as sacrifice and other outward ceremonies. (See i. 11, &c.) And these religious performances they looked upon as so acceptable to God, that these alone would secure his favour to them, and so long as they were punctual in these observances, they thought they needed not to fear any threatenings denounced against their sins. This opinion, together with their relying upon an external obedience to the letter of the law, and over-valuing the traditions of their rabbies and elders, was a principal cause of their rejecting the gospel, and being themselves rejected by God upon that account.

Ver. 14. *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people.*] A thing that will scarce be believed. (Compare Habak. i. 5.)

For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.] The most refined arts of their deep politicians shall not avail their authors, nor be able to preserve them from God's judgments; and their learnedest men shall lose their judgment and discretion. This threatening was remarkably verified under the gospel, when their crucifying Christ out of fear of the Roman power, brought the Romans upon them: and their learned rabbies ever since have minded little else but fabulous stories, and their cabalists have vented trifles for profound mysteries.

Ver. 15. *Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord.*] Who think they can carry on their projects without the knowledge or interposal of Providence.

Ver. 16. *Surely your turning things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay,* &c.] Your giving things unexpected turns, or false appearances, to hide your true designs, shall signify no more towards the producing the intended effects, than the clay does without the artificer. We and all our works are in the hands of God, as clay is in the hand of the potter, to give what form and fashion to them he pleases. (See xlv. 9. Jer. xviii. 6.) He is as wise as the wisest politician: (see xxxi. 2.) and when the finest schemes are laid, can work things to a quite contrary end.

Ver. 17. *Is it not yet a very little while.*] The following promises relate to the times of the gospel. (See the note on ver. 18. 23.) Nor is this expression any objection against such an interpretation, for the very same is used concerning Christ's coming to judgment, as if it were just at hand, Heb. x. 37.

And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?] A proverbial form of speech, to signify the great changes that shall happen; the high ones shall be abased, and the meek shall be exalted: (compare xxxii. 15.) as visible an alteration, as if the mountain Lebanon, famous for its cedars, should be turned into a corn-field or pasture; and the richest meadow-ground should be turned into a forest.

Ver. 18. *And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity.*] That blindness and insensibility, which the prophet complained of at the tenth and eleventh verses, shall be quite removed, and the word of God, which before was a book *sealed up,* shall become intelligible to ordinary capacities.

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This relates to the times of the gospel, (compare xxxv. 5.) when a plentiful effusion of God's Holy Spirit is promised. (See the note on xliv. 3. liv. 13.)

Ver. 19. *The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord,* &c.] This is another character of those flourishing times under the gospel; which the prophets often mention, in the glories of which the meek and humble shall have a particular share. (See the notes on xi. 4. xxvi. 6.)

Ver. 20. *For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed.*] By the *terrible one* we are to understand the foreign enemies of God's people: (see ver. 5. and xxv. 4, 5.) and by the *scorner,* those sceptics and infidels that lived among them, and made a mock of God's messengers, and what they said. (Compare xxviii. 14. 22.)

And all that watch for iniquity are cut off.] Who are continually employed in devising evil, and very industrious in bringing it to pass: *Who devise iniquity upon their beds! when the morning is light they practise it,* as the prophet Micah speaks, (Micah ii. 1.)

Ver. 21. *That make a man an offender for a word.*] Who condemn men for speaking the truth, as they often served the prophets, or for so slight a matter as an unwary expression.

And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.] Who plot mischief against the judges that sit at the city gates to distribute justice; that so they may without control oppress the righteous, and deprive him of his right. (Compare Amos v. 10. 12. Mal. iii. 5.) And this they will do upon the meanest considerations, to gain *a piece of bread,* as Solomon speaks, (Prov. xxviii. 21.) It was the custom for the judges to execute their office at the gates of the city. (See Deut. xxi. 19. xxii. 15. Ruth iv. 1. 11.)

Ver. 22. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed,* &c.] Abraham and Jacob, as fathers of the family, are taken here for the whole stock of true Israelites: and as God had often been their deliverer, so when he should free them from enemies without, and evil-doers amongst themselves, (see ver. 20.) then the faithful will begin to lift up their heads, and not be ashamed to shew themselves.

Ver. 23. *But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name.*] The words may be thus rendered, *For in his sight, his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, shall sanctify my name.* The prophet speaks of a new generation of the faithful, which shall be added to the church, called elsewhere the *work of God's hands.* (See xlv. 11. lx. 21. and compare Ephes. ii. 10.) When these shall be called or regenerate by that extraordinary measure of grace which is promised, ver. 18. they shall with one mind and one mouth sanctify my name, and give me all honour and reverence.

Ver. 24. *They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding.*] See xxviii. 7. and the tenth, eleventh, and eighteenth verses of this chapter.

And they that murmured shall learn doctrine.] They that murmured at, and found fault with, God's dispensations, shall now submit their own judgment to the will and wisdom of God.

CHAP. XXX.

ARGUMENT.

The Egyptians were the Jews' confederates at the time of Sennacherib's invasion: (see 2 Kings xviii. 21.) and are often reproved for that confederacy, and placing their chief trust in an arm of flesh. (See xx. 5. xxxi. 1.) This is the subject of the former part of this chapter. Then follow some gracious promises, which have a plain aspect upon the gospel-times: and from the twenty-seventh verse to the end of the chapter, there is a lively description of God's vengeance devouring the Assyrian army like fire, and consuming them all at once.

Ver. 1. *AND that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit.*] This *covering* may either signify their seeking for refuge and protection from Egypt without any directions from God: (see ver. 2.) or else it may mean their forming schemes to secure themselves against the calamities that threatened them, by ungodly methods, which are called a *covering,* or *hiding-place of falsehood,* xxviii. 15. 17. (See likewise xxix. 15.)

That they may add sin to sin.] Thereby adding this iniquity to their former transgressions.

Ver. 2. *That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth.*] It was usual in affairs of great consequence, especially in matters of war, to ask counsel from God by his prophets. (See Josh. ix. 4. 1 Kings xxii. 7. Jer. xxi. 2.) This the Jews neglected now, because they apprehended that the prophets would not give them such an answer as they liked. (See ver. 10. and the Argument of the chapter.)

Ver. 3. *Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame.*] See xx. 5. xxxi. 3.

Ver. 4. *For his princes were at Zoan, his ambassadors came to Hanes.*] King Hezekiah's ambassadors came to apply themselves to the king of Egypt and his great men, for succour and assistance; to which purpose, they arrived at the two principal cities of Egypt, Zoan, or Tanis, (concerning which, see the note on xix. 11.) and Hanes, called Tahapanes, Jer. ii. 16. xliii. 7. Ezek. xxx. 18.

Ver. 5. *They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them.*] The Egyptians, in conjunction with the Ethiopians, did assist the Jews, by giving a diversion to Sennacherib's forces (see the Arguments of the seventeenth and nineteenth chapters); but were both entirely routed: (see xx. 4.) so that, in effect, the Egyptians were rather a burden than a help to them, and are therefore compared to a *broken reed,* (xxxvi. 6.) which not only fails the hand that leans upon it, but pierces and wounds it.

Ver. 6. *The burden of the beasts of the south.*] The word *burden* hath an ambiguous sense; for, besides its usual signification, it denotes likewise a threatening prophecy: so the words imply, that the burdens of presents, which the Jews sent upon the backs of asses and camels, to make friends with all in Egypt (a country lying southward of Judea), should meet with but ill success.

From whence come—the viper and fiery flying serpent.] The wilderness that lies between Egypt and Judea, is described after the same manner by Moses, (Deut. viii. 15.) The fiery serpent is called, in the Hebrew, *saraph,* and hath

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its name from its bright and flaming colour: for the same reason the angels are called *seraphims*, because when they attended upon the Divine Schechinah, they appeared like flames of fire. (See Psal. civ. 4. and the note upon vi. 1.) It is called a flying serpent, because it springs up like a dart against those it strikes. Some authors, indeed, relate that there are winged serpents: but that does not seem so well consistent with the curse inflicted upon the serpent, (Gen. iii. 14.)

Ver. 7. *Therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.*] Or, *I have cried to her, i. e.* to Jerusalem, that their best security will be to be quiet, and see the salvation which God will work for them. (See ver. 15.) The word which our English renders *strength*, is *Rahab* in the Hebrew, which is likewise a name by which Egypt is called. (See li. 9. Psal. lxxxvii. 4. lxxxix. 10.) So the prophet intimates, that trust in God will be their best refuge, and supply the place of their Egyptian allies.

Ver. 8. *Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book,* &c.] A command of God to the prophet, to deliver those words which follow (ver. 9.) in writing, as an instruction not only to the present age, but also to after-times. When God commands a thing to be written, it signifies, that such a truth is of great importance, and such as deserves to be recorded, that the knowledge of it may be preserved. (Compare xxxiv. 39. lxv. 6. Psal. lvi. 8. Jer. xxii. 30. Dan. x. 21. Habak. ii. 2. Mal. iii. 16. Rev. xiv. 13.)

Ver. 10. *Prophesy not to us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.*] This was the true meaning of what they said, though not the very words. (See a like instance, xxviii. 15.) They did not care the prophets should say any severe truths which they did not love to hear. Insomuch that they often punished them, when they were exact in delivering their commission, as movers of sedition. So they served Jeremiah. (See Jer. xx. 1. xxxviii. 4. 6.) In like manner they used Amos. (See Amos vii. 10.) The same usage Micaiah met with before, (1 Kings xxii. 8. 27.)

Ver. 11. *Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path.*] Be not so nicely scrupulous, say they, or so servilely addicted to the truth, but comply a little with our humour, though it be by departing from what God had commanded you to deliver. The prophet still represents the true sense and meaning of these infidels.

Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.] Do not often repeat, *Thus saith the Lord;* or, *Thus saith the Holy One of Israel:* we are quite weary of hearing him mentioned so often. (Compare Amos vi. 10.)

Ver. 12. *Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel,* &c.] The prophet is resolved to usher in his reproofs with his preface, *Thus saith the Holy One of Israel,* what distaste soever it might give to men of reprobate minds: (see likewise ver. 15.) and he utters a farther threatening to those that despise what he now speaks from God.

Ver. 13. *Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall,* &c.] This vain confidence in your own conduct, or in the strength of Egypt, shall end in a sudden and final ruin: like the breach in a high wall, which, when once it begins to bulge, falls down without giving any warning, and the higher it is, the greater the downfall.

Ver. 14. *And he shall break it as the breaking of a potter's vessel; he shall not spare,* &c.] An earthen vessel, when it is once broke, can never be mended, or put to any use. (See Jer. xix. 11.) So it shall be in this case, there shall be nothing left or saved, that can be put to any farther use.

Ver. 15. *In returning and rest shall ye be saved.*] In returning from your evil purposes, and resting or relying upon God's promises, you shall be saved from your enemies. (See ver. 7.)

Ver. 16. *But ye said, No; but we will flee upon horses,* &c.] Egypt was famous for their breed of horses: (see note on li. 7.) from whence the Jews were desirous to furnish themselves with horses, the better to engage the enemy. (See xxxvi. 9.) But the prophet tells them, that the chief use they should make of them would be to secure to themselves a retreat.

Ver. 17. *One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one.*] As God had promised them, that if they continued obedient to him, *one of them should chase a thousand* of their enemies: (Deut. xxxii. 30.) so here he threatens the quite contrary upon their disobedience. (See Deut. xxviii. 25.)

Till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain.] Till ye be scattered one by one upon the mountains, as beacons stand solitary there.

Ver. 18. *And therefore will the Lord wait.*] The sense would run clearer, if the place were translated thus, *Nevertheless the Lord will wait;* or, *yet surely the Lord will wait,* &c. So the particle *laken* is rendered by our interpreters, Jer. v. 2. and so it should be translated in several other places where the prophets alter their style, and yet usher in the transition with this particle: so particularly it should be translated Hos. ii. 14. and Micah v. 3. (See Dr. Pocock upon that place.) The seeming incoherence of the prophetic style would be avoided in many places, by regarding the various sense of the Hebrew particles more carefully than interpreters have generally done: a subject that hath been treated of with great exactness by Noldius, in his Concordantia Particularum Hebræarum.

The Lord will wait that he may be gracious unto you.] God will wait till the judgments he hath threatened (ver. 15, 16.) have had their due effect for the reforming your lives, and rendering you fit objects of his mercy.

And therefore [or yet] *will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.*] He will shew his power in those judgments he brings upon you, (compare v. 16.) in order to your reformation, and the receiving you again into favour. The words may be explained of God's magnifying his mercy towards an undeserving people, that where *men's sins did abound, his grace might much more abound.* But I conceive that sense not so agreeable to the scope of the place.

For the Lord is a God of judgment.] Who wisely mixes and tempers justice with mercy. In this sense the word *judgment* is used, Jer. x. 24. xxx. 11. In the latter text our translators render the Hebrew *mishpat, in measure.*

Ver. 19. *For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem.*] The Hebrew runs thus, *The people in Zion shall dwell at Jerusalem:* the *people in Zion* is the same with the *people of Zion,* as the *mountains in Gilboa* are equivalent to the *mountains of Gilboa,* and the words are so translated by our interpreters, 2 Sam. i. 21. Or the sentence may be translated, *The people shall dwell in Zion* [and] *at Jerusalem;*

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the copulative particle being often understood. Notwithstanding the destruction of Jerusalem threatened by Sennacherib, the city shall still be inhabited as in former times, and shall be comforted after her sorrow; which is the import of the following words, *Thou shalt weep no more;* being spoken by way of apostrophe to Jerusalem.

From this verse to the twenty-seventh, follow many gracious promises of mercy, several of which cannot, with any propriety, be applied to the succeeding times of king Hezekiah's reign. Therefore we may reasonably suppose, that the prophet, taking a hint from those prosperous times which succeeded this great deliverance, was carried on to a view of better days, which might be expected under the flourishing state of the gospel. (See the notes upon x. 20. xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 20. *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more,* &c.] Though provisions should be scarce, during the time of the siege, yet you shall not want spiritual food for your souls, you shall not need to fear that *famine of the word of the Lord* threatened Amos viii. 11.

Ver. 21. *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way,* &c.] As God will afford you teachers, so he will give you grace to hearken to their instructions. His grace will supply the place of a tutor or monitor, it will be at your elbow, as it were, giving you directions, and correcting you when you do amiss. This may fitly be applied to that plentiful effusion of God's Spirit which is promised under the gospel. (See the notes upon xliv. 3. liv. 13.)

When ye turn to the right hand, or when ye turn to the left.] When ye are never so little out of the way. (Compare Deut. v. 32. Josh. i. 7. Prov. iv. 27.)

Ver. 22. *Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold,* &c.] Hezekiah's zeal for God's worship, incited his subjects to destroy all the monuments of idolatry in the land. (See 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.) The *coverings* here mentioned may be understood of silver or gold plates, with which their images were overlaid; though they adorned them likewise with costly robes and rich attire. (See Jer. x. 9. Baruch vi. 57, 58.) The destruction of idolatry is another mark of the flourishing state of the gospel. (See the notes on i. 29.)

Ver. 23. *Then shall he give the rain of* [or for] *thy seed that thou shalt sow the ground withal,* &c.] *i. e.* Rain after the seed is sown, to moisten the ground, and make it take root; this is called the *former rain,* Joel ii. 23. This, and the next verse, promise plenty of all manner of food, both for man and beast, in opposition to the *bread of adversity* mentioned ver. 20. We may farther observe, that the blessings of the gospel are sometimes represented under the emblems of fruitfulness and plenty. (See notes on iv. 2. xxxii. 20.)

Ver. 25. *And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters.*] God's blessings are often represented under the metaphor of a well-watered ground, which is the most fruitful. (See lviii. 11.) And here the prophet promises such fertility, that the barren and mountainous land shall yield as plentiful a harvest, as if it were watered with streams and rivers. But if we compare this verse with what follows, we shall discover a more mystical sense couched in the words, and find that they imply in them a promise of the large supplies of grace under the gospel, which should water the most dry and barren places, just as if streams of water were to take their course upon the tops of the highest mountains. This place I take to be parallel to that text, (xliv. 3.) *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,* &c. (Compare likewise xxxv. 6, 7. xli. 18. xliii. 19. lv. 1. Joel iii. 18. Zech. xiv. 8.) Mr. White is pleased to call this a *strange sort of interpretation;* but I must put him in mind, that it is the interpretation of Christ himself: (see John iv. 10. 14. vii. 38, 39.) and of St. Paul, who interprets the *waters flowing from the rock* in the wilderness, as mystically denoting Christ, and the benefits of the gospel, (1 Cor. x. 4.) And that plentiful communication of grace and glory, wherein the happiness of heaven consists, is described by the same metaphor, Rev. vii. 17. xxi. 6. xxii. 17.

In the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall.] This shall be remarkably fulfilled at the time when there shall be a terrible destruction of God's enemies: (see Rev. xiv. 20. xix. 21.) when the great ones of the earth shall fall, denoted here by high *towers;* (compare ii. 15.) or, by *towers,* we may understand the fortifications of the city, which is the mystical Babylon. (See the notes on xxvi. 5.)

Ver. 26. *Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,* &c.] Light is the emblem of joy and happiness; accordingly, happy times are expressed by bright and pleasant days, when *God's candle shines upon our heads,* as Job expresseth it, xxix. 3. But the words seem to describe that glorious state of the church, when there shall be no night; (see Zech. xiv. 6, 7. compared with Rev. xxii. 5.) nor any resemblance of it, no degree either of sorrow or ignorance.

In the day that the Lord bindeth up the stroke of his people, &c.] When he shall fully pardon their sins, and remove the punishments of them. (Compare i. 6.)

Ver. 27. *Behold, the name of the Lord comes from far.*] The name of God is the same with God himself, and it is said to come from *afar off,* as coming unexpectedly. So Christ is described as coming *from a far country* at the day of judgment, because of the unexpectedness of his coming, Luke xix. 13. 15.

Burning with his anger.] When anger or any other passion is ascribed to God in Scripture, it is a very good rule which the schoolmen give for the explaining such expressions, "affectus in Deo denotant effectus;" *passions in God denote that the effect is answerable to the highest emotion of passion which we can conceive.* Thus, when God is described as full of anger and fury, and his indignation as flaming out into revenge, we are to conceive the expressions as implying, that the effects of his displeasure will be as terrible, as we could suppose them to be if they proceeded from the most passionate resentment. But I think we may carry our notions a little farther in this matter, and venture to affirm, That since God's love and hatred do necessarily result from his wisdom, which approves or dislikes things according as they agree or disagree with his own infinite perfections, it must follow from hence, that although God be not subject to that turbulency and inconstancy which attend human passions; yet his favour and aversion must be as strong and vigorous, as lasting and permanent, as the

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highest expressions in Scripture concerning this matter can be supposed to import.

His lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.] So Christ is described as consuming sinners with the *breath of his lips,* (xi. 4.) because, whenever he pronounces sentence upon them, it is immediately put in execution: all things obeying his word and decree. (See the note there.)

Ver. 28. *And his breath as an overflowing stream.*] God's anger is often called the breath of his nostrils. (See Job iv. 19. Psal. xviii. 15.) The expression is taken from one of the symptoms of anger, which is breathing quick and short.

Shall reach to the midst of the neck.] See the note on viii. 8.

To sift the nations with a sieve of vanity.] *Vanity* sometimes signifies *destruction:* so, lvii. 13. *vanity shall take them, i. e.* they shall be destroyed. And here the *sieve of vanity* is such a one as doth not separate the chaff in order to save the corn, but makes an entire riddance, as when chaff is scattered before the wind. (Compare xxix. 4. Hos. xiii. 3. Psal. i. 4.) By the *nations* are chiefly meant the Assyrians and their confederates.

And there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.] See the same phrase xxxvii. 29. In both places the expression imports, that God would stop these people in the midst of their career, and make all their designs prove abortive, like those that miss their aim, or lose their way.

Ver. 29. *Ye shall have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept.*] The Jewish festivals were always kept from even to even; so the sabbath began on the Friday evening; (see Lev. xxiii. 32.) and the eve before any festival was part of the festival: (see Judith viii. 6.) from whence the same observation was derived into the Christian church. But the feast of the Passover is chiefly alluded to here, which was always kept in the evening, and the supper concluded with hymns. (See Matt. xxvi. 30.)

As when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of the Lord.] The solemn festivals, when the people came from all parts of Judea to worship at the temple, were observed with the greatest expressions of joy. (See Deut. xvi. 11. 14. Psal. xlii. 4.) Such joy will there be, saith the text, at Jerusalem, for their deliverance from Sennacherib's army.

Ver. 30. *And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard,* &c.] This destruction shall be from the immediate hand of God, in which he shall as visibly appear as if he had discomfited the army by a tempest of thunder, and lightning, and hailstones, as he formerly destroyed the Canaanites and Philistines. (See Josh. x. 10. 1 Sam. vii. 10. compare likewise Psal. xviii. 14. xxix. 6. of this prophecy, and see the note on that place.)

Ver. 31. *Shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.*] Compare x. 5. 24.

Ver. 32. *And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps.*] This is a very obscure translation of the words; the old translation published under king Henry VIII. renders them much plainer, thus, *Whithersoever he goes, the rod shall cleave unto him, which the Lord shall lay upon him.* Or the place may be thus translated more exactly to the Hebrew, *And every place where the terrible stroke shall pass which the Lord shall lay upon him, shall be* [filled] (or shall sound) *with tabrets and harps:* the words in the original, which our English renders *the grounded staff,* signify such a rod or stroke as sinks deep, and makes lasting prints or marks in the flesh: and the expression alludes to the *rod* with which the Assyrian *smote* or corrected God's people; (ver. 31.) as if the prophet had said, God hath prepared a rod to chastise him, that was before a scourge to all his neighbours. The import of the whole sentence is this, that every place where God shall inflict this heavy judgment upon the Assyrian, shall be full of joy and gladness. The Hebrew *tuppim, tabrets,* alludes to *Tophet,* a word of the same signification, by which name the prophet calls the Assyrian camp, ver. 33. (See the note there.) It was usual, likewise, to celebrate victories with tabrets and other instruments of music. (See Exod. xv. 20. 1 Sam. xviii. 6.)

And in battles of shaking shall ye fight with it.] God's severe judgments are expressed by his *shaking his hand over* a people or a place. (See xi. 15. xix. 16.)

Ver. 33. *For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared,* &c.] Tophet, otherwise called the Valley of Hinnom, was the place where the children were sacrificed to Moloch. (See Jer. vii. 31.) It had its name from the tabrets which sounded there to drown the cries of the children thus inhumanly murdered. Being a place set apart for that terrible execution, it was looked upon as the picture of hell itself, the word Gehenna being from thence derived. The prophet here applies the name to the camp where all the Assyrian army was to be destroyed. And as in Tophet great heaps of wood were piled together to burn the human sacrifices there offered, so God, saith the text, will find sufficient materials prepared like fuel for the fire, which his anger, like a train of brimstone, will kindle.

The only difficulty is, how Tophet can be said to be *prepared for the king of Assyria,* since Sennacherib himself did not die in the common destruction. To which it may be answered, that all his strength and glory perished there. But withal I conceive that this expression points at a more hidden sense couched under this description, which is the final destruction of sinners in that Tophet or Gehenna, of which the valley of Hinnom was only a faint resemblance, together with Satan their prince at the head of them.

CHAP. XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

A continuation of the same subject treated of in the former chapter: the prophet again reproves the Jews for seeking to Egypt for succour, and assures them of God's assistance, if they will tarry a little, and wait for his salvation.

Ver. 1. *WOE unto them that go down to Egypt for help,* &c.] See xxx. 1. 16.

Ver. 2. *Yet ye also is wise and will bring evil, and will not call back his words,* &c.] God is as wise as the ablest politician, and knows how to bring to pass his purposes as effectually; and will certainly make good his threatenings against the despisers of his commands. (See xxx. 13, 14.)

But will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and

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against the help of them that work iniquity.] He will bring his judgments as well upon those who have had the chief hand in forming this confederacy, as upon the Egyptians themselves, in whom they place their confidence. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 3. *Now the Egyptians are men, and not God.*] In whom alone we ought to put our trust.

And their horses flesh, and not spirit.] Spirit sometimes is equivalent with angel, and the angelical powers are described as *excelling in strength* far beyond any corporeal being. (See Psal. ciii. 20.) In other places, *spirit* signifies the same as the *soul*, and is opposed to flesh, as the more noble part of human nature. Taking the word in either sense, the meaning of the text is, that nothing extraordinary is to be expected from the Egyptian auxiliaries.

Both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down.] Both the Egyptians and they that rely upon their aid. (Compare xx. 4—6. 2 Kings xviii. 13.)

Ver. 4. *Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice,* &c.] An elegant similitude, representing God's almighty power, which no human strength is able to withstand; and exactly parallel to those verses in Homer, where Sarpedon is described as going against the Greeks, (Iliad μ. ver. 299, &c.)

Βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν, ὥστε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, ὅστ' ἐπιδευὴς
Δηρὸν ἔῃ κρειῶν, κέλεται δέ ἑ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ,
Μήλων πειρήσοντα, καὶ ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν·
Εἴπερ γάρ χ' εὕρῃσι παρ' αὐτόφι βώτορας ἄνδρας
Σὺν κυσὶ καὶ δούρεσσι, φυλάσσοντας περὶ μῆλα,
Οὔ ῥά τ' ἀπείρητος μέμονε σταθμοῖο δίεσθαι.

Which verses are thus rendered in the late English translation copied from the French:

As some fierce lion on the mountains bred,
Stung with keen hunger, searches for his prey,
Springs o'er the fences, and o'erleaps the fold:
For though the shepherds and the watchful dogs
On every side defend the woolly flock;
Yet his undaunted soul disdains to fly,
Till he hath seized his prey.

Ver. 5. *As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem.*] God's protection of his servants is commonly expressed by *covering them under his wings*, in allusion to the wings of the cherubims which covered the mercy-seat. (Compare Deut. xxxii. 11.)

Passing over it, he will preserve it.] As he did when he passed over the Israelites' houses in Egypt, (Exod. xii. 23.)

Ver. 7. *For in that day shall every man cast away his idols of silver,* &c.] See the note on xxx. 22.

Ver. 8. *Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword not of a mean man shall devour him,* &c.] He shall not fall by any mortal power, but by the hand of an angel. (See xxxvii. 36.) If we follow the common opinion, that the Assyrian army was destroyed by a pestilential disease, which was the immediate stroke of heaven; the expressions here exactly agree with the description of the angel, who smote the Jews with a pestilence, 1 Chron. xxi. who is there represented as standing with a *sword drawn in his hand*, (ver. 16.)

And his young men shall be discomfited.] Or, *his choice men*, as the word likewise signifies, the very flower of his army.

Ver. 9. *And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear.*] He shall betake himself to the fortified places within his own dominions, as those do who are afraid that an enemy is pursuing them. (See xxxvii. 37.)

And his princes shall be afraid of the ensign.] His chief commanders shall be afraid of those visible tokens of God's presence in, and protection over, Jerusalem, which were like so many standards lifted up in defence of his people. (Compare lix. 19.)

Saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.] Who hath placed his altar and his sanctuary there: and from thence will issue forth like fire, and consume all those who shall presume to violate that place of his especial presence. (Compare Obad. ver. 18. Zech. ii. 5. xii. 6.)

CHAP. XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

Whosoever carefully considers the ninth, tenth, and following verses of this chapter, will find that they relate to the calamities which the Assyrian invasion brought upon Judea; under those afflictions the wisdom and piety of king Hezekiah was one of the chief supports and comforts to his subjects, and consequently we may suppose that the beginning of the chapter doth contain a character of that excellent prince. But yet there are several expressions, particularly those in the third and fourth verses, that relate to happier times than Hezekiah ever lived to enjoy: and therefore upon the whole matter we may justly say, that the reformation which Hezekiah made was but a shadow or image of those greater improvements in grace and holiness which properly belong to the gospel-times, under the government of Christ, and the assistance of his Spirit. Mr. White objects against this interpretation, that none of the writers of the New Testament have applied any part of this chapter to our Saviour; but we are not to expect a particular application of all the prophecies of the Old Testament in the writings of the New. And we may observe, that many important prophecies, such as are particularly Daniel's weeks, are never distinctly mentioned there. Jacob's prophecy concerning Shiloh, (Gen. xlix. 10.) may be added as another remarkable instance of a prophecy concerning Christ, not mentioned in the New Testament. It is sufficient to justify such an interpretation, if the full import of the words look that way, and such an application be agreeable to those methods of interpreting prophecies which are observed in the New Testament; for those are to be looked upon as a public rule or standard for interpreting the Scripture prophecies.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.*] Under the government and example of so good a king as Hezekiah, inferior princes and magistrates shall execute their office with integrity and faithfulness. (Compare Psal. lxxii. 2, 3.)

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Ver. 2. *And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind,* &c.] And this prince shall be a refuge to us, when the storms of calamities overtake us, or the oppressions of our enemies, like excessive heat, do scorch and consume us. (Compare iv. 6. xxv. 4.)

Ver. 3. *And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.*] God shall plentifully afford men the light of his truth, and give them grace to make a good use of the instructions he vouchsafes unto them. When men are stupid and careless, they are said, by a contrary way of speaking, *to have eyes and see not, and to have ears and hear not,* (vi. 9. Jer. v. 21.) That this promise chiefly relates to the times of the gospel, will appear by comparing it with xxix. 18. xxxv. 5. If it be objected, that other prophecies foretell the blinding of the Jews under the gospel; we may answer with St. Paul, that *the children of the promise are accounted* for the true *seed* of Israel, in whom the promises are to be fulfilled; (Rom. ix. 8.) and farther, the same Divine Author assures us, the time will come when *all Israel shall be saved,* (Rom. xi. 26.)

Ver. 4. *The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge.*] The word *nimharim, rash,* translated *fearful* xxxv. 4. may signify, that those that are weak in faith shall come to more perfect degrees of knowledge.

And the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.] The most rude and illiterate, such as could not speak so as to be understood, shall discourse clearly and intelligibly of God and of their duty. The verb *nalag* is near akin in sound and signification to *lanag,* which signifies speaking in a barbarous and unknown language, xxviii. 11. So the text here may be fitly expounded of the conversion of barbarous nations, and their giving praises to God in their several languages.

Ver. 5. *The vile person shall no more be called liberal.*] Or, *shall not have the style and title of prince bestowed upon him;* for so the words in the original import. Under a prince that loves and honours virtue, unworthy persons shall not be advanced to degrees of honour and dignity.

Ver. 6—8. *For the vile person will speak villany,* &c.] The words shew the different temper and method of the base and narrow-souled man, and of him that is truly generous and public-spirited. The former hath no true sense, either of honour or conscience, but makes it his business, under specious pretences, to pervert judgment and justice: whereas the designs of the latter are truly great and worthy of his character, and it is by these only that he seeks to support his dignity.

Ver. 9. *Rise up, ye women that are at ease,* &c.] The prophet returns to the description of those calamities which should follow upon Sennacherib's invasion: and he addresses himself to the nice and delicate women, who would feel the greatest share in these hardships, not being used to any such before.

Ver. 10. *Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women.*] Some render the words, *days above a year shall ye be troubled,* &c. and understand them of Sennacherib's invasion; who came up against Judea in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, (2 Kings xviii. 13.) and in the year following God promised the king a recovery from his sickness, and that he would deliver him out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and prolong his life fifteen years, (2 Kings xx. 6.) Now Hezekiah reigned but nine-and-twenty years in all, so this promise of deliverance must have been made in the fifteenth year of his reign. But Archbishop Usher supposes that there were two invasions by Sennacherib; the first mentioned 2 Kings xviii. 13. the other spoken of in the seventeenth verse of the same chapter, and xix. 9. and thinks that Hezekiah's sickness happened between these two invasions, about three years before the total defeat of the Assyrian army. (See Annal. V. Testam. ad A. M. 3291. and 3294.)

Ver. 12. *They shall lament for the teats,* &c.] The sense would run easier and more agreeable to the original, if we alter the stops, and join the first sentence of this verse with what goes before, and the latter part of it with what follows, translating it thus, *Gird sackcloth upon your loins, and upon your mourning breasts. Upon the pleasant fields, upon the fruitful vine, upon the land of my people, shall come up briers and thorns.* The word *sophedim,* which our English translates *they shall lament,* is in the *masculine* gender, and therefore cannot be understood of the *women* mentioned ver. 11.

Ver. 13. *In the joyous city.*] See the notes on xxii. 2. xxiii. 7.

Ver. 14. *Because the palaces shall be forsaken.*] See v. 9.

The multitude of the city shall be left.] Or, *The city shall be forsaken of its multitude:* this may relate to Jerusalem; or else the word *city* may be taken collectively for cities in general. (See xxiv. 10. 12. xxv. 2. xxvii. 10.)

The forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.] Expressions denoting utter desolation. (See xiii. 21. xvii. 2. xxvii. 10.) *For ever* is as much as for a long time; and it may be extended to the present condition of Judea and its cities, which have now lain desolate for many ages. (See the notes upon the following verses, and upon xxvii. 10.)

Ver. 15. *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high.*] Until God gives us new life, and recovers us out of this forlorn condition, which may fitly be compared to the shadow of death. (Compare Psal. civ. 30.) *Pouring out of God's Spirit* does likewise signify the plentiful effusion of his grace. (See Joel ii. 28. Zech. xii. 10.) And if we take the phrase in this sense, the prophecy will belong to that restoration of the Jews, which we are to expect in the latter ages of the world.

And the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be accounted for a forest.] A proverbial expression denoting great alterations, that the places which were desolate before (see ver. 13.) shall again become fruitful; and those which were fruitful shall turn barren. It may mean, that the Israelites shall flourish again, and the Assyrians and other enemies of the church (see note on xi. 14.) shall be humbled: see an expression parallel to this, xxix. 17. only there the word *Lebanon* is used, as equivalent to the *wilderness* here; both words being opposed to grounds cultivated and manured by art and care.

Ver. 16. *Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.*] Judgment and righteousness are often equivalent terms. (See the first verse of this chapter, xxxiii. 5. Eccles. iii. 16.) Taking the words so, the sense will be, that all manner of peace and happiness shall flourish in that place which was lately a *wilderness,* but *is now* become *a fruitful field,* or *Carmel.* But sometimes they are opposed to each other, judgment

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being put for severity, and righteousness for mercy. So these words are plainly taken, Psal. xciv. 15. *judgment shall return unto righteousness; i. e.* God will change his severe proceedings into merciful dealings: and thus, perhaps, they are to be understood, i. 27. v. 16. of this prophecy. And this sense, I think, best explains this verse. The prophet had said, (ver. 15.) that the *wilderness should be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field into a forest,* or wilderness: then it follows in this verse, God's judgments shall be visible upon the wilderness (meaning the Assyrians, or, in general, the enemies of God's church), and his righteousness or mercy shall display itself upon the fruitful field, *i. e.* Judea. With this explication the eighteenth and nineteenth verses very well agree.

Ver. 17. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace,* &c.] The effects of God's goodness and men's reformation shall be peace within, and freedom from a hostile invasion without.

Ver. 18, 19. *And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation—when it shall rain, coming down on the forest.*] God's people shall enjoy all manner of rest and security, at which time his judgments shall come down in a very severe manner upon their enemies, expressed by the *forest,* or wilderness, (ver. 15, 16.) The word *forest* is likewise taken metaphorically in the prophetical writings for a city, because its stately buildings, or its great and principal inhabitants, resemble tall cedars standing in their several ranks. (See x. 33, 34. xxxvii. 24. Ezek. xx. 46. Zech. xi. 1.) And if we take the word in this sense, the two sentences of the nineteenth verse are equivalent. By *hail* is meant God's judgment. (See note on xxviii. 2.)

And the city shall be low in a low place.] By *the city* may be meant Nineveh, or Babylon, which was built in a plain: (see note on xxi. 1.) or it may in general signify the society of infidels, as that is opposed to the *city of God.* (See the note on xxvi. 5.) The scope of the place is to signify in general, that, by the same degrees that God's people are relieved their adversaries shall be abased.

Ver. 20. *Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.*] When these calamities befal their enemies, happy will God's people be who may sow their land in peace, which before was desolate by reason of hostile invasions: and though formerly overrun with briers and thorns, (see ver. 13.) yet will now become a *fruitful field,* (ver. 15.) and yield as plentiful a crop, as is seen in moist and well-watered grounds. It was the custom of the Jews to plough with asses, as well as with oxen, as appears from xxx. 24. Deut. xxii. 10. Spiritual blessings may here be implied under the promise of fruitfulness and plenty. (See the note upon iv. 2. xxx. 23.)

CHAP. XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

We may call this chapter an *epinikion,* or a triumphant ode upon the destruction of Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem. The prophet sets forth the several scenes of that transaction with all the beauties of a poetical description. At the beginning of the chapter he foresees the overthrow of the common enemy and oppressor. At the second verse he represents the humble addresses of God's people for deliverance: together with his gracious promises of protection by way of answer to their prayers, at the fifth and sixth verses. Then he describes the disappointment of Hezekiah's ambassadors, who humbly sued for peace, the damp that struck upon the spirits of the whole nation, (ver. 9.) and God's immediate interposition, when matters seemed to be desperate. Afterward the prophet severely reproves the hypocrites, and sets forth the security of those that put their trust in God, and hold fast their integrity, in such expressions as are a just pattern of the true sublime. From the seventeenth verse he describes how the drooping spirits both of king and people revived upon the raising of the siege, and congratulates Jerusalem as being under the immediate protection of the Almighty, and thereby secured from receiving the least damage in the midst of so many dangers. I have given so particular an account of the contents of this chapter, because I am persuaded, that if a translation could be made of it that should come up to the original, it would appear to be as noble a piece of poetry as is to be found among the most admired writings of the ancients.

Ver. 1. *WOE to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled.*] It is the practice of the great oppressors of the world to make war upon their neighbours without any just provocation, or having received any real injury from them; this is very fitly expressed in the known fable of the Lion and the Lamb, and it is against such practices that this woe is denounced.

And dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!] We read, indeed, (2 Kings xviii. 7.) that Hezekiah *rebelled against the king of Assyria:* but the meaning of that text is no more but that he would not stand to those dishonourable terms of slavery to which his father Ahaz had submitted, when he professed himself the servant of the king of Assyria, (2 Kings xvi. 7.)

When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled.] See xxi. 2.

Ver. 2. *Be thou their arm every morning.*] *Their arm, i. e.* our arm: it is usual in the prophets to change their style from the first to the second or third person, in speaking upon the same subject. (See ver. 6. of this chapter, and the note upon lxiii. 1.) *Every morning,* or, *in the morning, i. e.* speedily; see the like expression, Psal. xlvi. 5. *God shall help her, and that right early;* the Hebrew reads, *At the appearing of the morning:* (so Psal. xc. 14. and cxliii. 8.) Some suppose that the phrase alludes to God's overthrowing the Egyptians when the *morning appeared,* Exod. xiv. 27.

Ver. 3. *At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.*] At the confusion and outcry which was in the Assyrian army upon that sudden stroke, whereby a hundred and eighty-five thousand men were struck dead upon the place, the remaining part of those forces got away as fast as they could; this execution is called *God's lifting up himself,* or exerting his power. (Compare ver. 10.)

Ver. 4. *Your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar.*] The Jews shall plunder the Assyrians' camp, till they leave it as bare as the locusts or caterpillars leave the trees, when they have eat up the leaves. (Compare Nahum iii. 15.) Some explain the verse thus; Ye shall be as easily overcome, as the husbandman de-

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stroys the locusts and caterpillars; but I do not think that sense so proper, because locusts and caterpillars are elsewhere described like a formidable army, which nothing can withstand. (See Joel ii. 2, 3, &c.)

Ver. 6. *And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the times, and the strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.*] The prophet applies himself to Hezekiah, of whom he speaks, in the third person, at the end of the chapter: and tells him, that those Divine graces of wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God, (see xi. 2, 3.) will be the support of his time and government, and stand him in more stead, than all the forces and treasure in which other princes place their confidence.

Ver. 7. *Behold, their valiant ones* [or messengers] *shall cry without,* &c.] Or, *shall cry in the streets.* The words describe the ambassadors, or messengers, which Hezekiah sent out to Rab-shakeh, (2 Kings xviii. 18.) returning sadly disappointed, with tears in their eyes, and *their clothes rent,* (ibid. ver. 37.)

Ver. 8. *The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth.*] There is no travelling the public roads for fear of the enemy. (Compare Judg. v. 6.)

He hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.] Hezekiah bought peace of Sennacherib, (2 Kings xviii. 14—16.) but he would not stand to his agreement: such a haughty conqueror as he, will not be obliged by his treaties any longer than he pleases, and glories in the destruction that he makes both of men and cities. (See x. 10, 11.)

Ver. 9. *The earth* [or land] *mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down,* &c.] The whole land is under a consternation, and the most beautiful parts of the country seem to languish and wither at the approach of the enemy, and look upon themselves as already destroyed. Lebanon was beautiful for its cedars: Sharon for its flowers and gardens: (see Cant. ii. 1.) Bashan and Carmel, for their rich ground and fat pastures. (Compare xxxv. 2. Micah vii. 14.)

Ver. 10. *Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted.*] When things are come to this extremity, and the case seems desperate, then is the time for God to interpose, and make his strength more eminently conspicuous in the midst of man's weakness.

Ver. 11. *Ye shall conceive chaff; ye shall bring forth stubble.*] Your designs shall all prove abortive. (Compare lix. 4. Psal. vii. 14. xvii. 13. xxix. 5.)

Your breath, as fire, shall devour you.] Or rather, *your wrath,* or indignation against God's people, shall turn to your own destruction.

Ver. 12. *And the people shall be as the burnings of lime.*] They shall be perfectly consumed, as when chalk-stones are reduced to lime: calcining, or reducing to ashes, being one of the last effects of fire. (Compare Amos ii. 1.)

As thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire.] Sinners are often compared to thorns, which the fire catches presently; so do God's judgments lay hold on such who have made themselves *vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.* (See note on ix. 18.)

Ver. 13. *Hear, ye afar off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.*] So remarkable a judgment as this deserves to be known and laid to heart by all men, both far and nigh.

Ver. 14. *The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath seized the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?*] This and the two following verses describe the different apprehensions of the good and bad under their present circumstances. They that did not rely upon God for help, were ready to cry out, Who can bear the approach of the Assyrian, who devours all things like fire? These words may, in a secondary sense, be applied to the terror of hell torments, which, when the consciences of sinners begin to be awakened, give them just cause for having dreadful apprehensions of the Divine vengeance. And they that could not bear the thoughts of a mortal enemy's falling upon them with all his force; how will they bear the weight of God's wrath, when he shall declare himself their enemy, and set his *terror in array against them?*

Ver. 15. *That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood.*] That will not give ear to any bloody designs formed against the life of the innocent. To *stop the ears* at the mention of a thing, is to shew the utmost detestation of it. (See Acts vii. 57.)

That shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil.] As persons turn away their face from any sight they loathe, and have an aversion for. So God is described as of *purer eyes than to behold iniquity,* (Habak. i. 13.)

Ver. 16. *He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks.*] God shall place him out of the reach of danger, and shall be unto him a rock and a fortress. (Compare Psal. lxi. 2.)

Bread shall be given unto him, his waters shall be sure.] He shall not want any of the necessaries of life, even in the midst of a siege.

Ver. 17. *Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.*] The king will appear in public, dressed in his royal robes, and with his usual state and splendour, after the defeat of the Assyrian; not covered with sackcloth, as when he went to the temple in the time of his distress, (xxxvii. 1.)

They shall behold the land that is very far off.] The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall no longer be confined by their enemies within the city, but shall have liberty to look abroad, and visit the distant parts of the country.

Ver. 18. *Thy heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? Where is the receiver? Where is he that counted the towers?*] Every one shall with pleasure reflect upon the dangers they have escaped, and shall ask, in a triumphant manner, *Where is the scribe,* or muster-master? Where is the collector of the taxes? Where is the master of the artillery or ammunition? How are they of a sudden vanished, and disappear?

Ver. 19. *Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive,* &c.] The very looks and habit of a foreign and insulting enemy carry something of terror in them. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 49.) Their language is perfect gibberish, and unintelligible, and this makes it a vain thing to try to soften them with good words. (See the notes on xxviii. 11.) The Hebrew expresses a foreign language by a *deep lip,* or *speech:* our translators render it *a strange speech,* Ezek. iii. 5, 6.

Ver. 20. *Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities,* &c.] You may now view Zion in perfect peace, and freed from all fears of hostile invasion. God hath chosen it to be the place set apart for his solemn worship, and the temple of his own residence, and not a *stake of it shall be removed,* or

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a cord of it broken; i. e. no part of its walls or houses shall receive any damage from the enemy. (Compare xxxvii. 33. liv. 2.)

Ver. 21. *But there the glorious Lord will be to us a place of broad rivers and streams,* &c.] God will be as great a security to this city as any broad river or deep stream, which is both an ornament and a defence: (compare Psal. xlvi. 4, 5.) and none of our enemy's taller or lesser ships shall be able to annoy us. (See the following note.)

Ver. 23. *Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast,* &c.] Having compared the Assyrian army to a naval force, (ver. 21.) he persists in that metaphor, and describes them as in a shipwrecked condition; the spoil of which wreck shall be divided among the citizens of Jerusalem, and the weakest of them should have some share in it.

Ver. 24. *And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.*] The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not be sensible of those maladies under which they lately languished: but the removal of those evils shall give them comfortable assurance that God hath forgotten their former iniquities.

CHAP. XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

We may distinguish this prophecy into several *parts*, or *sections*, as hath been observed at the beginning of this work. The foregoing section ended with a description of the general judgment, and some of the remarkable circumstances that do attend it; (chap. xxiv.) and then follow the songs and grateful acknowledgments of the church, (chap. xxv.—xxvii.) This chapter seems to treat much of the same subject with the twenty-fourth, and the following chapter entertains us with a new scene of the church's glories which should succeed.

Ver. 1. *COME near, ye nations, to hear,* &c.] A summons to all the world to this description of the general judgment, which concerns them all. (Compare Psal. l. 1.)

Ver. 2, 3. *For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies,* &c.] These two verses may very fitly be applied to the *battle of the great day of the Almighty,* mentioned Rev. xvi. 14. 16. compared with xvii. 14. xix. 19.

Ver. 3. *And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.*] The effusion of blood shall be so great, that it shall run down in streams from the sides of the mountains, as if the hills themselves were melted into blood.

Ver. 4. *And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,* &c.] See note on xiii. 10.

Ver. 5. *For my sword shall be bathed in heaven.*] Princes and magistrates are denoted by the host of heaven: (see the forementioned place, and xxiv. 21.) and the words here import, that God's sword shall not spare the mightiest any more than the meanest.

It shall come down upon Idumea.] The enemies of God's church are often represented by the name of some country which was remarkable for its hatred and ill usage of the Jews: such as Egypt, Babylon, Edom, and Moab; (see note on xi. 14.) and thus Edom or Idumea may be taken here, that people always bearing a particular spite and hatred to the Jews, though they were nearly related to them: (see Psal. cxxxvii. 7. Obad. ver. 10, &c.) where they are likewise threatened with utter excision, which certainly came to pass. (See Mal. i. 3.) But the words here seem to describe a more general judgment, of which the destruction of Edom was an imperfect representation. To confirm which interpretation, it may be farther observed, that the words Edom and Bozrah may be taken *figuratively,* because in their original sense they may fitly be applied to any place of slaughter. *Edom* signifies *red,* as blood is; and *Bozrah,* a *vintage;* which, in the prophetical idiom, denotes God's vengeance upon the wicked; (see Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 19.) and is otherwise expressed by the *wine-press of God's wrath,* (Isa. lxiii. 3. Rev. xix. 14.) To confirm this exposition, we may observe, that Edom and Bozrah are joined together again, lxiii. 1. a place parallel to this, where another scene of God's vengeance is represented. The prophets in their denunciations of God's judgments, sometimes allude to the *etymology* of the names by which places are called. (See Micah i. 10. 14.) And several parts of Jacob's prophecy allude to the names of each tribe. (See Gen. xlix. 8. 13. 15, 16.) The Jewish writers do generally suppose, that Edom in the writings of the prophets stands for Rome: and if we compare this chapter with Rev. xvii. and the context before and after (which place several popish commentators, as well as the protestants, explain of modern Rome), we shall find a great agreement and correspondence between several verses in each chapter, particularly between ver. 2. 6, 7. of this chapter, and Rev. xvii. 14. between ver. 8. and Rev. xviii. 5. 8. 20. between ver. 9, 10. and Rev. xviii. 9, 10. and xix. 3. between ver. 11. 13—15. and Rev. xviii. 2. 22, 23.

Ver. 6. *The sword of the Lord is filled with the blood of lambs and goats,* &c.] *Lambs, goats,* and *rams,* in this verse, and *unicorns, bullocks,* and *bulls,* in the next, mean all ranks and sorts of people, the strongest as well as the weakest, who shall all be brought down like beasts to the slaughter. (Compare Psal. lxviii. 31. Jer. l. 27. li. 40. Ezek. xxxix. 18.)

For the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.] A great slaughter is called a *sacrifice,* because it is offered up for the atonement of God's justice. (See note on xxix. 2.)

Ver. 8. *For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.*] A time which shall be remarkable for God's vindicating the cause of his oppressed truth and people. (Compare lxiii. 4. Jer. l. 28. li. 36.) *A day* and a *year* are equivalent here; and as the word *day* is often taken for some remarkable time, so a *year* is here used in that large and unlimited sense. In the like sense we read of the *acceptable year of the Lord,* lxi. 2.

Ver. 9. *And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,* &c.] An allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was an emblem of the everlasting destruction of the wicked at the last day. (See St. Jude, ver. 7.)

Ver. 10. *It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.*] The same expressions are used to denote the final destruction of the wicked, Rev. xiv. 11. xix. 3. and import that the wicked shall feel the effects of God's wrath for ever.

Ver. 11. *But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess*

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it, &c.] It is a great degree of desolation, when a place that was the resort for multitudes of men becomes a habitation of wild and savage creatures. Compare xiii. 21. xiv. 23. Rev. xviii. 2. where these expressions signify utter desolation.

And he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.] The word *eben*, which signifies a *stone*, is sometimes taken for a *plummet*: (see Zech. iv. 10.) and that sense agrees best with this place, and makes it exactly parallel with 2 Kings xxi. 13. *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab*: in both which texts the instruments of building are applied to destroying.

Ver. 12. *They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there.*] The words might more clearly be translated thus, *They shall call* (or summon) *their nobles, but there shall be no kingdom there:* there shall be no sign of any government. This may relate to the final destruction of antichristian states and governments. (Compare the fourth and fifth verses of this chapter.)

Ver. 13. *And thorns shall come up in her palaces.*] Compare xxxii. 13.

Ibid. and Ver. 14. *It shall be a habitation for dragons and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island,* &c.] See the notes on xiii. 21, 22.

Ver. 16. *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read.*] God's omniscience, whereby all events, past, present, and to come, are represented to him under one single view, is often described in Scripture, as if it were in the nature of a register-book, wherein every occurrence is exactly set down. (See xxx. 8. lxv. 6. Deut. xxxii. 34. Psal. lvi. 8. Dan. vii. 10. Mal. iii. 16.) In like manner, saith the text, this prophecy is a register of the fate of Idumea, (see ver. 6.) and whosoever, in aftertimes, will compare the event with this prophecy, will find every circumstance here foretold to be punctually fulfilled.

No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate.] No one of the creatures mentioned in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth verses.

Ver. 17. *And he hath cast the lot for them, his hand hath divided it unto them by line.*] God hath appointed to each of these animals its particular share of the land, with the same exactness as he divided Judea by lot among the children of Israel. (Compare Psal. lxxviii. 55. Josh. xviii. 8.)

CHAP. XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

That there is no necessity of confining the judgments denounced in the last chapter to the single country of Idumea, but they may belong to later times and occurrences, hath been shewed in the Argument and notes upon that chapter. And by the same reason the new face of things here described, may be applied to the flourishing state of the church, or the golden age of the gospel, to commence from our Saviour's appearing, and to be more fully completed when all his enemies *shall be destroyed.* Indeed, Mr. White tells us, that *interpreters would never have dreamed of this sense, had they consulted the prophet's words*: but I must put him in mind, that both Christ and the apostles have applied several passages in this chapter to the gospel-times, as will appear in the following notes: nay, our Saviour appeals to this very prophecy to prove himself the Messias described by the prophets. (See Matt. xi. 3—5.) And if Mr. White does not think Christ's argument to be good, he himself ought to be reckoned among the *dreamers of the circumcision*, whom he so much despiseth.

Ver. 1. *THE wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them.*] That is, for the judgments inflicted upon God's enemies. When the prophets denounce God's judgments against incorrigible sinners, they often speak of them as matter of rejoicing to the righteous, that they take satisfaction in seeing the Divine justice made manifest. (See Psal. lviii. 9, 10. Jer. li. 10. 48. Rev. xviii. 20.) By the *wilderness* is meant the church which before was in a desolate and forlorn condition, but now shall spread and flourish. So the church is described as dwelling in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14. thereby to denote its obscure and afflicted state. Both places, perhaps, allude to the Israelites sojourning in the wilderness, who are called the *church in the wilderness*, Acts vii. 37.

Ver. 2. *It shall blossom abundantly.*] Spiritual blessings are often set forth under the emblems of fruitfulness and plenty. (See note on iv. 2. and compare xxx. 23. xxxii. 15. xli. 19. lv. 12. lxv. 10.)

The glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.] See xxxiii. 9.

Ver. 3. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.*] The prophet exhorts those that are strong to *comfort the feeble-minded*, such as by reason of the continuance of their afflictions began to despair of God's mercy.

Ver. 4. *Behold, your God will come with vengeance—he will come and save you.*] The destruction he brings upon your enemies will be the means of your deliverance. (Compare 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.) This may be applied to Christ, who is God as well as man. (See the note on vii. 14. and compare lxi. 2.)

Ver. 5. *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,* &c.] Our Saviour proved himself to be the Messias to John's disciples, by appealing to this prophecy, as literally fulfilled in the miracles which he wrought: (Matt. xi. 2—5.) so that they certainly relate to the times of the gospel. And yet this doth not hinder but that the words may be capable of a farther accomplishment: *viz.* that God will remove all that blindness and prejudice which hindered men from coming to the acknowledgment of the truth. (Compare xxix. 18. xxxii. 3. xlii. 7. Acts xxvi. 18.) The gospel-promises have different degrees and seasons of completion, as hath been observed upon ii. 2. and shall be farther observed in the Preface.

Ver. 6. *Then shall the lame man leap as a hart.*] If we understand this expression figuratively, it denotes that the church and its members shall renew their strength, as if a man should return to his youthful vigour after a decrepit old age. (Compare xl. 31.)

And the tongue of the dumb shall sing.] See the note on xxxii. 4.

For in the wilderness shall waters break out.] This signifies the plentiful effusion of God's grace. (See note on xxx. 24.)

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Ver. 7. *In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.*] By *dragons*, are meant a kind of serpent that chooses to live in dry and barren places. (See note on xiii. 22. and compare Psal. xliv. 19.)

Ver. 8. *And a highway shall be there.*] The removing all obstacles to the restoration of God's people, is elsewhere expressed by *preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight a highway for our God*, xl. 3. (See likewise xlii. 16.) This and the foregoing verse, *the parched ground shall become a pool*, &c. seem to be exactly parallel with the tenth and eleventh verses of the forty-ninth chapter: *By the springs of water shall he guide them, and I will make all my mountains away, and my highways shall be exalted;* the prophet in both places alluding to the two great conveniences of travellers, which are good roads and plenty of waters. This place probably relates to the restoration of the Jews in the latter ages, as many parts of the succeeding prophecies do, though they may have an immediate aspect upon their return from Babylon.

And it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.] This way shall be appropriated to the use of God's people; for *holiness* signifies an entire separation, or setting a thing apart for some particular use. So Jerusalem is called *Holy*, because *no more strangers shall pass through it*, (Joel iii. 17.) *i. e.* no army of enemies shall subdue it. (Compare Obad. ver. 17. and Jer. xxxi. 40. and lii. 1. of this prophecy.)

But it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.] If we follow this translation, the word *those* must relate to *the ransomed of the Lord* in the next verse. But I think the words may be better translated thus, *But he (i. e.* God) *shall go along with them in the way, and the simple shall not err therein.*

Ver. 9. *No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon.*] God hath promised to *make a covenant with the beasts of the field*, that they shall not annoy or hurt his people, when they return to their obedience. (See xi. 8. Hos. ii. 18. Ezek. xxxiv. 25.) This denotes in general the protecting them against persecution, and all outward violence: the cruelty of men is sometimes compared to the rage of wild beasts. (See Psal. xxii. 12. 21. 2 Tim. iv. 17.)

Ver. 10. *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs.*] An allusion to the expressions of joy which were used by the Jews, when they went up to Jerusalem at their solemn festivals. (See xxx. 29.)

And everlasting joy upon their heads.] The phrase alludes to the crowns, or garlands, which were put upon the heads of persons newly married; (see Cant. iii. 11.) and were used at other times of public rejoicing. (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 19.) The place may fitly be applied to the time of Christ's marriage with the church. (See Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2. and the notes upon lxi. 10.)

Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.] Compare xxv. 8. lxv. 19. Rev. xxi. 4.

CHAP. XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

This and the three following chapters, excepting part of the thirty-eighth, are almost word for word the same with the second book of Kings, from the thirteenth verse of the eighteenth chapter to the twentieth verse of the twentieth chapter. From whence we may probably conjecture that this was part of that history of Hezekiah's reign which Isaiah wrote, as we read 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. It is inserted here because it gives great light to several particulars of the foregoing prophecies, especially those passages which speak of Sennacherib's invasion; and the thirty-ninth chapter contains a prophecy of the captivity, and is an introduction to the remainder of Isaiah's prophecies, a great part of which relate to the restoration of the Jews, and their return into their own land. For the same reason, the history of the taking Jerusalem by the Babylonians is annexed to Jeremiah's prophecies, because it helps to explain and confirm several passages in them. (See Jer. lii.)

I shall be the shorter upon these chapters, because the greatest part of them is fully explained by Bishop Patrick in his Commentary upon the second book of Kings.

Ver. 2. *AND the king of Assyria sent Rab-shakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem with a great army.*] Archbishop Usher supposes this attempt upon Jerusalem to have been three years after the former expedition mentioned at the first verse. (See his Annales Vet. Test. ad A. M. 2191. and 2194.)

By the conduit of the upper pool.] See note on vii. 3.

Ver. 6. *Thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt.*] See xx. 5, 6. xxx. 2, &c. xxxi. 1. Ezek. xxix. 6, 7.

Ver. 8. *Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria.*] Or, *give hostages*, so a word from the same original signifies, 2 Kings xiv. 14. Rab-shakeh directs his discourse to king Hezekiah, as if he were present, and bids him offer any pledge, pawn, or wager, which he would be willing to forfeit, if he could not provide riders for two thousand horses, which the king of Assyria was to furnish him with. Horses were scarce in Judea, which was the cause that few of the natives were trained up to that sort of military discipline: but they relied upon Egypt for horsemen, as it follows. (See the note on ii. 7.)

Ver. 10. *The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.*] He interprets his former successes, as if they were an argument that Heaven was on his side: (see ver. 19, 20. x. 9, 10.) or he may mean that some oracle, or idol, in request among the Assyrians, had promised him success: and this pretended deity he impiously calls by the name of the true God.

Ver. 11. *Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language.*] The Syrian tongue is what we now call Chaldee. (See Dan. ii. 4. Ezra iv. 7.)

That they may eat their own dung, &c.] He threatens them with the utmost extremity of famine which a strait siege would produce, in case they refuse to comply with his master's proposals.

Ver. 16. *Make an agreement with me by a present.*] This was a token of homage which conquered nations paid to their conquerors. (See 2 Sam. viii. 3. 6.)

Ver. 22. *With their clothes rent.*] It was the custom of the Jews, when they heard the name of God blasphemed, to rend their clothes. (See 2 Kings v. 7. Matt. xxvii. 65.) This crime Rab-shakeh had been guilty of, in speaking of

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the true God in as contemptible a manner as he did of idols, (ver. 7. 19, 20.)

CHAP. XXXVII.

See the Argument of the former chapter.

Ver. 3. *THE children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.*] A proverbial expression denoting present death, or the extremity of danger. (See Hos. xiii. 13.)

Ver. 7. *I will send a blast upon him.*] The blasting of God's displeasure. (See ver. 35.)

And he shall hear a rumour.] A *panic* fear shall fall upon him, and he shall be alarmed with an uncertain report, that some enemy designs to fall upon him, having heard that his army is weakened with so great a loss, as that of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men.

Ver. 9. *And he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia.*] The word is *Cush* in the Hebrew, which very often signifies *Arabia*, in which sense most commentators understand it here, though our translators always render it *Ethiopia;* and it may here be probably understood of Ethiopia properly so called. (See the note on xviii. 1.)

Ver. 12. *The children of Eden.*] The country of Eden where Paradise was situate was in Mesopotamia, as learned men are generally agreed; and one good proof of that opinion is taken from this text, and from Ezek. xxvii. 23. in both which places it is joined with *Haran*, a noted city in Mesopotamia, called *Charran* by the Septuagint, and *Charræ* in Latin; a place famous in Roman authors for the defeat of Crassus and his army.

Ver. 13. *Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim?*] We find this expressed, with some little variation, xxxvi. 19. *Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad; where are the gods of Sepharvaim?* From whence Dr. Spencer ingeniously conjectures, that the word *Melech, king*, was the name of an idol, called elsewhere *Moloch*, and worshipped by these people, (lib. ii. de Legib. Hebræor. cap. 10. sect. 1.)

Ver. 16. *O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims.*] Who hast declared thyself in a peculiar manner the God of Israel, by choosing this temple for the place of thy residence, where thou vouchsafest thy appearance from between the *cherubims*, and givest favourable answers to us, when we humbly beg thy assistance. (See Numb. vii. 89.) The two titles, the *Lord of hosts*, and *he that dwells upon*, or *inhabits the cherubims*, as some render the phrase, are usually joined together: (see 1 Sam. iv. 2. 2 Sam. vi. 2.) because God's sitting upon the cherubims in the temple, did signify his being attended with the host of heaven, as always in a readiness to obey his commands. (See 1 Kings xxii. 9.)

Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.] Hezekiah here asserts God's sovereignty, in opposition to the blasphemies of Rab-shakeh and his master, who esteemed the God of Israel but as Lord, or *tutelary genius* of the particular country of Judea, and thereby levelled him with the pretended gods of other nations. (See ver. 10—12. of this chapter, and xxxvi. 19, 20. Compare likewise 1 Kings xx. 28.)

Ver. 22. *The virgin, the daughter of Zion.*] See note on xxiii. 12.

Ver. 24. *By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof.*] Cities, in the prophetical writings, are sometimes metaphorically represented by woods or forests, and the several ranks of inhabitants by the taller and lesser trees which grow there. (See xxxii. 19. x. 34.) And this sense agrees best with the scope of this place; which is to set forth the proud brags of the Assyrian, in the figure of a pompous rhetoric, and to represent him as threatening to take Mount Zion, and the capital city of Jerusalem, and destroy their principal inhabitants.

And I will enter into the height of his border.] I will take possession of the principal parts of his dominions: such were Lebanon and Carmel esteemed. (See xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2. Jer. xxii. 6.)

And the forest of his Carmel.] i. e. *The wood*, or forest (for the word is the same in both texts), which is *in the midst of Carmel*, Micah vii. 14. and is spoken of there as the choicest pastures of Carmel, and is probably the same place which is called the *forest of the vintage*, Zech. xi. 2. for some part of Carmel was planted with vineyards. (See Isa. xxxiii. 9.) The margin reads, *The forest and his fruitful field:* for the *forest* and *Carmel* are spoken of as two distinct sorts of grounds. (See x. 18. xxix. 17.) Carmel being a place noted for great fertility (see the last note); the word is sometimes taken appellatively for a fruitful field: and is so translated in those texts.

Ver. 25. *I have digged, and drunk water.*] Or, as the text in 2 Kings xix. 24. reads, *I have digged and drunk strange waters; i. e.* I have marched through deserts where it was expected my army should perish for thirst, and yet even there have I digged and found water. He brags that he had overcome difficulties seemingly insuperable, and never failed in executing any design he had undertaken.

With the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.] I have made rivers fordable by turning their streams another way. Bochart thinks, that by the Hebrew *matsor, besieged places*, is to be understood *Egypt.* (See the note on xix. 5.) Sennacherib conquered Egypt before he besieged Jerusalem. (See xx. 5, 6. and the note on xix. 17.)

Ver. 26. *Hast thou not heard long ago, how that I have done it?* &c.] These are the words of God in answer to the boasts of the proud Assyrian; wherein he puts him in mind, that all his successes ought to be ascribed to God: that it was his providence predetermined these events, and brought them to pass in their appointed time, and made him the instrument of the Divine vengeance upon such cities as deserved utter destruction, and weakened the hands of their inhabitants, so that they were not able to defend themselves.

Ver. 28. *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and coming in, and thy rage against me.*] God lets him know, that none of his designs were hid from his all-seeing eye, and that he perfectly knew how much ill-will he bore in mind against his city and sanctuary; and as the successes he had already gained were owing to him, so he could put a stop to them whenever he pleased. The phrase of *going out and coming in* is used for leading out armies to war, and bringing them home again. (See Numb. xxvii. 21. Deut. xxxi. 2. Josh. xiv. 11.)

Ver. 29. *Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and*

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my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.] I have thee as much in my power as the fisherman can manage the fish, when he hath put a hook into his jaws: (see Job xli. 2.) and as the rider can curb the horse, and turn him which way he pleases, when the bit is in his mouth. And now I will turn thee back unsuccessful, and thou shalt be glad to get home again with all speed. (See ver. 34.)

Ver. 30. *And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself,* &c.] God directs these words to king Hezekiah, and tells him that this shall be a sign of God's favour and protection to him and his people, that although this year the enemy had destroyed all the crop that was sown; and the next year being the *sabbatical* year, the law forbade them either to sow or reap; yet they should want no provision for these two years: and in the third year they should sow in peace, and reap the fruits of their labour. Concerning the seventh year, which was the *sabbatical* year, or year of rest, see Lev. xxv. 4, &c.

Ver. 31. *And the remnant that is escaped out of the house of Judah.*] See note on x. 22.

Ver. 32. *The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.*] See note on ix. 7.

Ver. 33. *He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there,* &c.] See note on xxix. 3.

Ver. 36. *Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand.*] Smote them with a pestilential disease, as Josephus and most expositors understand the words. (See note on xxxi. 8.)

Ver. 38. *And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.*] Called Sarchedon, in Tobit, (i. 21.) and Asordan, in the Septuagint, a word near akin to Assaradinus, by which name he is called in Ptolemy's canon. Under his government, the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms were joined into one monarchy: he reigned thirteen years over the latter, as appears by the forementioned canon; though he reigned in all above forty years from his father's death.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains an account of Hezekiah's sickness, which happened at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, of his miraculous recovery, and the song of thanksgiving which he wrote upon that occasion.

Ver. 1. *IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.*] See the note on the sixth verse.

Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die.] Settle thy worldly concerns; for this disease, by the course of nature, will prove mortal.

Ver. 3. *And Hezekiah wept sore.*] One reason of his great concern is supposed to be, because he should leave his kingdom in great distraction, under the terrors of a foreign invasion, and without any heir to take the government upon him, for Manesseh was not born till three years after this. (Compare 2 Kings xx. 6. xxi. 1.)

Ver. 6. *And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria.*] From hence it appears, that Hezekiah's sickness was before the destruction of Sennacherib's army, though it be not mentioned till afterward, because the sacred writer would not interrupt the thread of that story. (See the note on xxxii. 10.)

Ver. 8. *So the sun returned ten degrees.*] It is the common opinion that the sun itself went back, but the heavenly bodies were restored again to their regular position, as much being deducted from the next night as was added to this day. But some think this a particular miracle wrought by the shadow's going back upon the sun-dial of Ahaz, and not taken notice of in other countries, which occasioned an embassage from Babylon to inquire about the truth of it, (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.)

By which degrees it was gone down.] These ten degrees are supposed to be marks of so many hours by which the shadow *went down*, as the text expresses it both here and 2 Kings xx. 11. But there is no need we should understand it of the declining part of the day, or the afternoon, for the word may be understood in general of a progressive motion; and Bishop Patrick tells us from Dr. Alix, this miracle was wrought about ten o'clock in the morning; nor can we be certain what portion of time is meant by these *degrees*, for the division of the day into hours seems not to have been so ancient an invention: that is commonly ascribed to Anaximander or Anaximenes, who flourished about two hundred years after, and probably learned it from the Chaldeans. To this purpose we may observe, that Daniel is the only writer of the Old Testament that mentions an hour as a division of time, and there is no Hebrew word that signifies such a portion of time.

Ver. 11. *I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.*] The good men under the law had but imperfect notions of a future state, and thought it a great unhappiness to be deprived by death of the communion of saints here upon earth. Hezekiah might also be concerned to think, that the public worship of God might be less frequented, after it had lost so zealous a patron as himself.

Ver. 12. *Mine age* [or life] *is removed from me, like a shepherd's tent.*] Shepherds do not pitch their tents long in one place, but remove for the convenience of pasture. (See the note on xiii. 20.)

I have cut off like a weaver my life.] My sins are the cause that the thread of my life is cut off, like that of a weaver.

From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.] I concluded I should die before night. (Compare Job iv. 20.)

Ver. 13. *I reckoned till morning, that as a lion so would he break all my bones.*] When night came, I reckoned I should die before the next morning, my pains were so great as if the whole frame of my body were just ready to be dissolved.

From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.] The second day of my illness I had the same expectations of death, which I had the day before: upon the third day he recovered. (See 2 Kings xx. 8.)

Ver. 14. *Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove.*] My pains sometimes made me cry out aloud; at other times my strength was so low, I could only inwardly groan and bemoan myself.

Mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.] I had scarce strength to lift up mine eyes to heaven, I even despaired of any help from thence, but yet I could not forbear crying out, O Lord, thou

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scest that death is come like a cruel executioner to seize me, and it is thou only canst relieve me, and deliver me out of his hands.

Ver. 15. *What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.*] The suddenness of my deliverance surprises me, so that I want words to express my thankfulness: all I can say is, that no sooner did God promise to restore my health, but I immediately found the effects of his goodness.

I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.] The sense is more intelligible in our old translation, which renders the words thus, *I will, so long as I live, remember this bitterness of my life:* that is, the remembrance of the misery I endured, shall continually excite me to renew my thankfulness for this thy mercy.

Ver. 16. *O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.*] As all men's lives are thy gift; so I shall always acknowledge the preservation of mine to be owing to thy goodness in promising, and thy faithfulness in making good thy promise.

Ver. 17. *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness.*] The words may be translated, *Behold, my grievous anguish is turned into ease.*

Ver. 18. *For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee,* &c.] The dead cannot be instruments of promoting thy glory here, or making known thy goodness to others. (Compare Psal. xxx. 9. cxv. 17.)

Ver. 19. *The father to the children shall make known thy truth.*] Thy wonderful mercy towards me shall be recorded to after-ages, and fathers shall mention it to their children, as an instance of thy faithfulness.

Ver. 20. *Therefore will we sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.*] We will sing this and other hymns which Hezekiah had ordered to be used in the public worship. (See 2 Chron. xxix. 25. 30.)

Ver. 21. *Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the bile.*] There might be some natural virtue in such a plaster for ripening the sore, as physicians have observed; but the speediness of the cure must be ascribed to a supernatural cause.

Ver. 22. *Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?*] This relates to ver. 20. where Hezekiah promises to make his grateful returns for God's mercies in the most public and solemn manner, and thereby make good that part of the promise which Isaiah gave him, that in *three days he should be able to go up to the house of the Lord,* (2 Kings xx. 5.) To confirm the truth of which promise, Hezekiah demanded the sign mentioned in the following verses there, and in the seventh and eighth verses of this chapter.

CHAP. XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

The king of Babylon sending ambassadors to congratulate Hezekiah's recovery, the king received them with great kindness, and with some degree of vanity shewed them all his treasures and rarities: to reprove this piece of pride, Isaiah by God's direction acquaints him, that the time will come when all these boasted riches shall be carried to Babylon, and even the heirs of the royal family should be treated as slaves and captives there. This history is inserted here as a proper introduction to the succeeding prophecies, many of which relate to the Babylonian captivity, and the return of the Jews from thence.

Ver. 1. *AT that time Merodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan.*] Merodach was the name of an idol worshipped by the Babylonians, and Baal or Bel was another. (See Jer. l. 2.) And these two idols, with the addition of Adan, or Adon, which signifies *lord,* gave a name to this king of Babylon. It was usual for the Babylonian kings to take their names from the idols they worshipped. Thus we find one of their kings was called Evil-Merodach, (2 Kings xxv. 27.) Nebo was another idol of the Babylonians (see xlvi. 1. of this prophecy): from whence Nabonassar, Nebuchadnezzar, and several other kings of Babylon, took their names. And Daniel had the name of Belteshazzar given him, *according to the name of my god,* saith Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 8. This king is here called the *son of Baladan;* which Baladan Archbishop Usher supposes to be the same person who is called in profane authors *Belesis,* or *Belesus,* and *Nabonassarus,* from whence the famous computation of time called *Æra Nabonassari* took its name. (See Annales Vet. Test. ad A. M. 3257.)

Sent letters and a present to Hezekiah.] As many other princes did. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.) One reason of sending this embassy was, to satisfy himself about the prodigy of the sun's going backward upon the king's recovery. (Ibid. ver. 31.) The Babylonians were famous for the study of astronomy, which made their king the more inquisitive about so extraordinary a phenomenon.

Ver. 2. *The precious ointment.*] The balsam that grew near Jericho was reckoned the very best of that kind. (See Josephus, Antiq. lib. iv. cap. 6. and de Bello Judaic. lib. v. cap. 4.)

Ver. 3. *They are come from a far country to me, even from Babylon.*] See the note on v. 26.

Ver. 4. *There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.*] This he did in *the pride of his heart,* as we read, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. 31. which occasioned the prophet to denounce the following judgment.

Ver. 7. *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee—they shall take away,* &c.] Even some of thy posterity and of the royal family, shall they put into servile offices in the king of Babylon's court. (See this fulfilled in Daniel and his companions, Dan. i. 3, &c.)

Ver. 8. *Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.*] The expression denotes the king's submitting to, and acquiescing in, God's decree. (Compare 1 Kings ii. 38.)

For there shall be peace and truth in my days.] The king thought it a great favour, that God would delay that punishment which he might have inflicted presently, and prolong the tranquillity of his kingdom for some time. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.)

CHAP. XL.

ARGUMENT.

Here begins a new section of this prophecy, as was observed at the beginning of the book; wherein the prophet

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raises his style, and describes the future glories of the church with a loftiness of expression suitable to the dignity of the subject. He had plainly foretold the Babylonish captivity in the foregoing chapter, and in this he revives the Jews with the comfortable promise of a return from thence. This is the ground-work of a great part of the following prophecy: but the many predictions we find in the succeeding chapters of this prophecy, relating to the life and death, the character and offices, of the Messias, and the flourishing state of the church under him, can never be supposed to receive their due accomplishment, unless we assert that the prophet was carried on from his first subject to a farther view of the enlargement of the church under the gospel, and the bringing the fulness of the gentiles into it. And these prophecies are so worded in many places, that the literal sense of the text does better agree with the gospel-times, than with those that were nearer the prophet's view: as may be particularly observed in some passages of this very chapter. I shall conclude this Argument with that judicious observation of our learned Mr. Thorndike, (de Jure finiendi Controvers. cap. 4. p. 60, 61.) "Equidem quæ Judæis post reditum a captivitate magna et gloriosa promissa sunt, cœpisse quidem impleri fateor sub Maccabæis, liberoque ex postliminio ejus populi statu. Et tamen quæ de idolis destruendis, et de proselytis aggregandis ibi prædicuntur, si sub Evangelio implenda non fuissent, non solum nihili facienda, sed ne vera quidem fuissent, cum pro magno id pollicentur, quod præ idololatriæ aut Mahumedismi fœcunditate nullius momenti sit."

Ver. 1. *COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.*] The prophet addresses himself to God's messengers, whose office it was to publish the glad tidings of peace and salvation. (See lii. 7.) The Septuagint understand the words of the priests, and read the beginning of the next verse thus, *O ye priests, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.*

[*Comfort ye my people.*] Compare xlix. 13. lii. 9. The times of the Messias are called the *consolation of Israel*, (Luke ii. 25.) and one of the names of the Messias was to be *Menahem*, i. e. *the Comforter*, according to the rabbins. (See Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 209.) The prophet here speaks to those that were to *bring glad tidings to Zion*, ver. 9. as the words should be there translated.]

My people.] Mr. White, in his preface, p. 11. makes it a difficult question to resolve whom the prophet here means, if the words be applied to the gospel-times. Now I think it is very easy to give an answer to this question out of the gospel, *viz.* that the prophet speaks of those who "waited for the consolation of Israel, and looked for redemption in Jerusalem," (Luke ii. 25. 38.) Of which kind were all the pious and well-disposed persons who lived at the time of our Saviour's appearing. Mr. White, indeed, affirms, *that the greatest part of the people thought themselves to stand in no need of comfort:* but this is so far from being true, that we find by many passages of the gospels, that the main body of the Jewish nation were in great expectation of the Messias at that time, and much pleased with the thoughts of his being near at hand; though afterward many of them were disappointed at the meanness of his outward appearance, and thereupon took up an incurable prejudice against him.

Ver. 2. *Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished.*] Any state of servitude or hardship is compared to a state of warfare in Scripture. (See 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.) Thus the word is applied to the attendance of the Levites in the service of the sanctuary, Numb. iii. 23. viii. 24. The phrase here alludes likewise to the discharge given to soldiers after so many years' service. (Compare Job vii. 1.)

For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.] That is, double in proportion to God's usual severity in punishing men's sins. (Compare Jer. xvi. 18. xvii. 18. Rev. xviii. 6.) *God punishes men less than their iniquities deserve;* (Ezra ix. 13.) yet he shewed greater severity against the sins of the Jews, than towards those of other nations. (See Dan. ix. 12. Amos iii. 2.) Some translate the words thus: *She shall receive from the Lord double for all her sins;* taking the word *sins* for the punishments due to sin, as it is often used; and then the sense will be, She shall be fully made amends for her sufferings, and receive twice as much as she had before, as Job did, Job xiii. 10. (Compare lxi. 7.)

Ver. 3. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness.*] The prophet calls the way by which the Jews were to return from captivity into their own country, by the name of *the wilderness*, alluding to their passing through the wilderness in their way from Egypt to Canaan. In other places, the prophet compares God's care in conducting them home from their dispersions, to his miraculous leading them through the wilderness. (See xli. 18. xlix. 10.)

Ibid. and Ver. 4. *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted,* &c.] The first intention of the prophet in these two verses is to declare, that God will remove all impediments which might hinder the return of his people into their own country. (Compare lvii. 14. lxii. 10.) To the same purpose are several expressions we meet with in the following chapters, of *God's opening rivers in the wilderness, of conducting his people by the springs of waters, making his mountains a plain,* &c. (See xli. 18. xlix. 10, 11.) Which expressions allude to the custom of princes to send harbingers before them, to make the roads easy and commodious for their passage. The same metaphor is used by Homer, Iliad o'. ver. 260. where Apollo, promising to assist Hector, saith,

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ προπάροιθε κιὼν, ἵπποισι κέλευθον
Πᾶσαν λειανέω———————

I will go before, and make smooth all the passages.

But to this exposition it must be added, that the very letter of the text does more exactly suit to the office of John Baptist, who *prepared the way of the Lord,* by preaching *in the wilderness.*

Ver. 5. *And all flesh shall see it together.*] The manifestation which God shall make of himself by the gospel, will be such a blessing as all nations shall have a share in.

Ver. 6. *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass,* &c.] By the *voice* is meant the voice of God, who is introduced as commanding his messenger or prophet to proclaim this important truth; That all men are weak and impotent, and it is God alone and his

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promises that can safely be relied on. The words in their first intent import, that the restoration of the Jewish nation, after a seventy years' captivity, was not to be brought to pass by any human force or wisdom, but merely by the power and goodness of God. (See Zech. iv. 6.) Which observation is still more remarkably verified in the revelation of the gospel, the great design of which is to exalt God, and to humble man; whose promises are the only foundation of a lasting happiness, and these are wholly owing to the mercy of God, and shall be effected without any human means or assistance, *that no flesh may glory in his presence.* (See 1 Cor. i. 29—31. 1 Pet. i. 25.)

Ver. 7. *The grass withereth,—because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.*] Or, *because the wind of the Lord bloweth upon it.* (Compare Psal. ciii. 16.) As wind and storms deface the beauty of the grass and flowers; so the breath of God's displeasure blasts the counsels of men, and brings them and their designs to nought. (See ver. 24.)

Ver. 8. *But the word of our God shall stand for ever.*] See note upon ver. 6.

Ver. 9. *O Zion, that bringest good tidings!—O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings!*] The marginal reading gives a much better sense, *O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion! O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem!* and this reading agrees better with what follows, *Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.* (Compare likewise xli. 27. lii. 7.) The Hebrew *mebasshereth,* though of the feminine gender, yet is masculine in sense, and so it is used Psal. lxviii. 11. Just as *Koheleth,* of the same gender, is used for Solomon the Preacher, Eccles. i. 1.

Get thee up into a high mountain.] They that were to publish any proclamation, used to get up to the top of some high hill, from whence their voice might be heard a great way off. (See lii. 7. Judg. ix. 7. 2 Chron. xiii. 4.) The same ceremony was used among the Jews in giving notice of their solemn festivals.

Lift it up, be not afraid.] For God will certainly make his words good.

Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.] See the note on xlviii. 16.

Ver. 10. *And his arm shall rule for him.*] He will visibly exert his power, and establish the kingdom of the Messias, without calling in any human assistance. (Compare lix. 16. and see the note upon ver. 6.)

Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.] Or rather, according to the marginal reading, *His recompence before him.* (Compare xlix. 4. lxii. 11.) The gospel does in the clearest manner set forth the different rewards of the righteous and the wicked. (See Matt. xvi. 27. Rev. xxii. 12.)

Ver. 11. *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.*] As the care which God took in providing for, and protecting, his people, is resembled to the office of a shepherd: (see Psal. xxiii. 1. lxxx. 1. xcv. 7. c. 2.) so the office of the Messias is often described by the prophets under the same metaphor. (See Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24.) In allusion to which places our Saviour calls himself the *good shepherd,* (John x. 11.) and describes himself as *coming into the world to seek and save that which is lost, and bringing home the wandering sheep upon his shoulders rejoicing.*

He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, &c.] As a shepherd gathers his lambs together, that none of them be lost, carries those in his bosom that are not able to go, and gently drives the ewes that cannot bear the fatigue of travel: such gentleness shall Christ use towards the weak ones of his flock, giving them instruction according as they were able to bear it, and taking all possible care to reduce the stragglers into his fold. (See John x. 16. xxi. 15, 16. Mark iv. 33.) These expressions may have some relation to God's care in conducting his people into their own country from Babylon, (compare xlix. 10.) but do more eminently belong to Christ, as appears by the many allusions in the New Testament to this and such-like passages in the Old. (See Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25. v. 4. Rev. vii. 17.)

Ver. 12. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?* &c.] Here begins a lofty description of God's almighty power, shewing that he is great above all his works, and able to do beyond what we can think or conceive; and the design of it is to persuade the people to place their whole trust in him, and to rest assured that what he hath promised he is able to perform: (see ver. 27, 28.) and withal to arm them against idolatry. (See ver. 18, &c.)

Ver. 13, 14. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him?* &c.] These two verses inform us, that God's wisdom is as great as his power, that he *works all things after the counsel of his own will,* without asking advice of any, or acquainting them with the measures of his proceedings.

Ver. 15. *He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.*] The Hebrew language calls all those countries *islands,* which we go to by sea. (See note on xi. 11.) From thence it comes to signify any place or country. (See xx. 6. lix. 18.)

Ver. 16. *And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt-offering.*] If we were to make an oblation suitable to the greatness of the Divine Majesty, the forest of Lebanon would not suffice for wood, nor the beasts that live in it for an offering. (Compare Psal. l. 10—12.)

Ver. 18. *To whom then will ye liken God?*] The Jews, being to live among the idolatrous Babylonians during their captivity, were by all means to be cautioned against practising their idolatries. This makes the prophet so frequently enlarge upon the vanity and folly of idol-worship, in this latter part of his prophecy. Jeremiah gives the Jews the same caution, (x. 2, 3.) and especially in those remarkable words (ver. 11. of that chapter), "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens:" which are written in Chaldee, that the Jews might be able to answer the idolaters in their own language.

And what likeness will ye compare to him?] See note on xliv. 13.

Ver. 19. *And casteth silver chains.*] By which the idols are fastened to walls or pillars.

Ver. 20. *He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth him a tree that will not rot,* &c.] He that cannot be at the charge of a costly image overlaid with gold or silver, provides himself with a wooden one, and gets an artificer to make it for him, and fasten it with nails that it should not fall down. (See xli. 7. Jer. x. 4.)

Ver. 21. *Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath*

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it not been told you from the beginning?] There was a general tradition of the creation of the world still conveyed from one age to another, even among the heathens, which, together with the arguments which natural reason suggested to them, that all things must derive their original from one principle, was sufficient to instruct them in the knowledge of the one true God, to preserve them from idolatry, and convince them that God could not be like the work of men's hands. (See Rom. i. 19, 20, &c.)

Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?] The words run thus in the original: *Have ye not understood*, or *considered, the foundations of the earth? i. e.* by whom they were laid, even by *him that sitteth upon the circle of the earth*, &c. as it follows. The verb *bûn* signifies to *consider*. (See note on xxviii. 19.)

Ver. 22. *It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth.*] As supreme Lord and Governor of the world.

That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain.] Like the curtain of a tent. (Compare Habak. iii. 7.) The heavens are described in Scripture as God's tabernacle, or the seat of his glorious presence. (See Psal. civ. 2. and lxvi. 1. of this prophecy.)

Ver. 23. *That bringeth the princes to nothing.*] He removeth one prince or monarchy, and setteth up another: (see Psal. lxxv. 7. Dan. ii. 21.) and will put an end to the Babylonish monarchy, and set up the Persian, in order to return the captivity of his people.

Ver. 24. *Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown—and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither*, &c.] Either he never suffers them to thrive, or, if they make a figure for some time, a sudden blast of his displeasure (see ver. 7.) makes them wither, and puts an end to their flourishing condition.

Ver. 26. *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number.*] A man cannot lift up his eyes to heaven, and view the exact order and regular motions of the heavenly bodies, but he must be convinced that there is a wise Author of nature, who at first created, and still preserves this system of things. Thus Tully expresses the natural sense mankind hath of this matter: (Tuscul. Quæst. lib. i.) "Cum videmus speciem primum candoremque cæli, deinde conversionis celeritatem, tum vicissitudines dierum atque noctium, commutationesque temporum quadripartitas, eorumque omnium moderatorem solem, lunamque—et stellas eosdem cursus constantissimo servantes——hæc cum cernimus, possumusne dubitare quin his præsit aliquis effector?" The heavenly bodies are called God's host or army, because he presides over them, and places them in their proper rank and order, and they exactly keep those stations that he hath appointed them, and fulfil those commands which he hath given them. (Compare Psal. cxlvii. 4.)

For that he is strong in power; not one faileth.] God's works have this remarkable pre-eminence above men's, that they never wear out or need repairing. (See Psal. cxix. 90, 91.) The words of Seneca are observable to this purpose: (Epist. lviii.) "Manent cuncta, non quia æterna sunt, sed quia defenduntur cura regentis: immortalia tutore non egent, hæc conservat artifex, fragilitatem materiæ vi sua vincens."

Ver. 27. *Why sayest thou, O Jacob—My way is hid from the Lord?*] These are the desponding words of the people detained under captivity, who were apt to think that God did not regard their condition.

Ver. 28. *Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*] We cannot fathom the depths of his providence, nor assign the reasons of all his proceedings; but this we may be sure of, that his delaying to deliver his people does not proceed from want either of ability or knowledge, since he *upholds all things by the word of his power*, and his wisdom extends itself to all the parts of the creation.

Ver. 30. *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.*] Those that make the greatest boast of their strength, as young men are apt to do, shall find it fail them, whenever God withdraws his support: he means the Chaldeans and the choice men of their armies; so the word *bachurim* signifies, xxxi. 8.

Ver. 31. *But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.*] Eagles are observed to enjoy a vigorous old age, whence comes the proverb, *aquilæ senectus:* and this healthy constitution of theirs seems to have given rise to the vulgar opinion, as if they grew young again after they had been old. (See Psal. ciii. 5.)

CHAP. XLI.

ARGUMENT.

In this and the five following chapters, God is introduced as pleading his own cause against the false gods of the heathen, and challenging the idols to shew such instances of their power and goodness in protecting their votaries, as might be alleged in his behalf with respect to his care and providence over the Jews. These instructions were very proper to confirm that people in their religion, and preserve them from being drawn aside to comply with the Babylonish idolatry: and they likewise contain in them a plain prediction of the calling of the gentiles, and their turning from idols *to serve the true and living God.*

Ver. 1. *KEEP silence before me, O islands.*] God summons the heathen nations to plead their cause before him, and in order to it, commands silence to be kept, according to the form observed in solemn courts of justice. By *islands* are meant those heathen nations that were parted from Judea by the sea. (See the note on xi. 11.) In this sense, those that live upon the Mediterranean Sea are called the *islands of the gentiles*, Gen. x. 5. Accordingly the word is rendered ἔθνη, *gentiles*, by the LXX. in the fifth verse of this chapter, and xlii. 4.

And let the people renew their strength.] Let them muster up the whole strength of their cause, and make the best plea they can for themselves. (See ver. 21.)

Ver. 2. *Who hath raised up the righteous man from the east?*] Many expositors understand this of Abraham, whom God called from the other side of Euphrates, which lay eastward of Judea; but I think it is rather meant of Cyrus, as appears by comparing this place with the twenty-fifth verse of the chapter, and with xlv. 13. xlvi. 11 And

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Cyrus is here described as typically representing Christ; (see the note on xlv. 1.) being first of all styled *Righteousness* (the *righteous man* our English renders it), which is one of the titles of Christ; (see Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.) and then is said to come from the east, by which name Christ is also described, Zech. iii. 8. where the word *Tsemah*, which our interpreters translate *Branch*, does properly signify the *east*, and is accordingly rendered Ἀνατολὴ by the LXX.: which very word is applied to Christ, in allusion to that prophecy of Zechary, by St. Luke, i. 78. where our English translate it the *day-spring*, but the margin reads the *sun-rising*.

Called him to his foot.] *i. e.* Called him to follow him, as the phrase is elsewhere rendered. (See Exod. xi. 8. Judg. iv. 10. viii. 5. 1 Kings xx. 10. 2 Kings iii. 9.)

Gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings, &c.] The same things are said of Cyrus, ver. 25. of this chapter, and xlv. 1, &c.

Ver. 3. *He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.*] He shall be a successful conqueror, even when he pursues his enemies through strange and unknown countries. The preter-perfect tense is here put for the future; a way of speaking common in the prophets. (See note on xxi. 9.)

Ver. 4. *Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning?*] By *calling the generations from the beginning*, is meant God's disposing and ordering the several successions of ages, and allotting the proper seasons for the bringing his own designs to pass. (Compare xliv. 7.) God is represented in Scripture as doing every thing by his bare word and command, the creatures immediately answering his call as dutiful servants. (See Job xxviii. 34, 35.)

Ver. 5—7. *The isles saw it and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came*, &c.] Remote countries were astonished at the sudden rise of the conqueror Cyrus, and joined in an alliance together to check his growing greatness; just as several artificers that are concerned in the trade of idol-making, assist one another in carrying on their common interest, and stir up the zeal of others in the defence of image-worship. (See Acts xix. 25.) This passage may fitly be applied to the heathen powers combining together to support their idolatry, and suppress the Christian religion.

Ver. 8. *But thou, Israel, art my servant*, &c.] The expressions are very endearing: it is honourable to be God's servant, still more so to be his *chosen* servant, and to be descended from one to whom he vouchsafed the title of *friend*, as God did to Abraham, (2 Chron. xx. 7.) the greatest honour that any man is capable of: which glorious privilege Christ was pleased to communicate to his disciples, (John xv. 13.)

Ver. 9. *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof.*] As I have taken your forefathers out of Egypt, so will I take you out of Chaldea, as I did likewise your father Abraham, (Gen. xi. 31.) The preter-perfect tense may be taken here for the future as before, ver. 3. Assyria and Egypt are usually joined together, as the most remarkable countries from whence the Jewish captivity should return. (See the note on xi. 16.) In like manner, at the end of the world, *Christ will gather his elect from the four winds*, (Matt. xxiv. 31.) and of *them whom God hath given him, he will lose none*, (John vi. 38.)

Ver. 10. *I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*] I will support thee with my power, and thereby make my fidelity, in fulfilling my promises, appear to the world.

Ver. 11. *They shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.*] God's truth shall at last prevail against all opposition, and the kingdom of Christ shall subdue and break in pieces all its adversaries. (See Dan. ii. 44. compare Isa. liv. 17. lx. 12.)

Ver. 12. *Thou shalt seek them, but shalt not find them.*] *i.e.* If thou shouldest go about to seek them, thou shouldest not be able to find them. The expression denotes utter destruction. (See Psal. x. 15. xxxvii. 36.)

Ver. 13. *For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand.*] The joining of right hands hath in all nations been looked upon as a token of friendship, or of entering into a mutual league and covenant.

" Heus ubi pacta fides, commissaque dextera dextræ ?"

Where is the plighted faith and right hands join'd?
Ovid. Epist.

So God saith here, that he will take Israel by his right hand, and support him with his own right hand, (ver. 10.)

Ver. 14. *Fear not, thou worm Jacob.*] Though thou art despicable and trampled upon by every body. (See Psal. xxii. 6.)

Ver. 15. *Behold, I will make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument, having teeth.*] Concerning the manner of thrashing or beating out their corn in Judea, see the note on xxi. 10. xxviii. 28. From thence the word is applied to the crushing or subduing an enemy. (See Jer. li. 33. Habak. iii. 12.)

Thou shalt thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff.] By the *mountains* and *hills*, are probably meant the greater and lesser kingdoms or countries which were enemies to God's truth and people: so the phrase signifies, ii. 14. Psal. lxxii. 3. The expressions in this and the following verse allude to the custom of the eastern countries, of having their thrashing-floors upon the tops of hills. (See xvii. 13.)

Ver. 17, 18. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none—I the Lord will hear them—I will open rivers in high places*, &c.] God promises his people that he will furnish them with all sorts of accommodations for their return home; that they should neither be afflicted with heat nor thirst, two calamities that are very incident to travellers in hot countries. (Compare xlix. 10. Jer. xxxi. 9.) And the latter of these was particularly grievous to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness, to which this place alludes; as also to God's miraculous supplying them with water there out of the rock: (compare xlviii. 21.) which ran in a stream like a river, and followed them a great part of their journey: see Psal. cv. 41. 1 Cor. x. 4. and was, as the apostle there tells us, a mystical representation of Christ and the benefits of the gospel. (See note on xxx. 24.)

Ver. 19. *I will plant in the wilderness the cedar*, &c.] As it were on purpose to shelter my people in their return home from the scorching heat of the sun. (Compare

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Baruch v. 8.) Nothing is more refreshing in hot countries, than a shade or covert from the scorching beams of the sun. (Compare xxv. 4, 5. xxxii. 2. Psal. cxxi. 6.)

The shittah-tree.] Called *Shittim-wood,* Exod. v. and elsewhere.

Ver. 20. *That they may see, and know—that the hand of the Lord hath done this.*] The many wonderful steps by which the restoration of the Jewish nation shall be brought about, will convince all considering persons that it is the work of God: and his power will still more undeniably discover itself in the propagation of the gospel, and the enlightening those that sit in darkness with the saving truth of it. (See the notes on xliv. 3.)

Ver. 21. *Produce your cause, saith the Lord,* &c.] He challenges the idolaters to plead the cause of their idols, and give convincing proofs of their divinity. (See ver. 1.)

Ver. 22. *Let them shew the former things, what they be,* &c.] Let the idols plead their own cause, or do you their worshippers do it for them, and prove they ever gave any true oracles or prophecies relating to former times, and that the event hath exactly answered the prediction, and this will give credit to any predictions they shall make relating to things future.

Ver. 23. *Shew the things that are to come, that we may know that ye are gods.*] God only can certainly foreknow future events, especially such as depend upon contingent causes, and the determinations of men's free-will. But this does not hinder, but that some of the predictions of the heathen idols or oracles might be true, or else they would hardly have been able to have kept up their credit. But the event answered their predictions in such cases chiefly, where prudent conjecture might go a great way; such might be the prediction of Saul's death by the evil spirit at Endor, (1 Sam. xxviii. 19.) Evil spirits, being very nimble and active, may likewise foretell in one place what they see in another. This account Athanasius gives of the oracle, which foretold the overflowing of the Nile; which he supposes the evil spirit might do, by having seen the rains which fall in Ethiopia some time before, and cause that inundation. (See Athanas. Life of Anthony the Hermit, p. 456. tom. ii. edit. Commel.) But there is no comparison between such predictions and the prophecies recorded in Scripture, where there is a series of remarkable events foretold, reaching from the beginning of the world to the end of it: together with a punctual prediction of names and other circumstances several ages before the event. (See xlvi. 10.)

Yea, do good, or do evil.] The heathens worshipped some of their gods, in hopes to receive good from them, and others for fear they should do them a mischief, who were, for that reason, called, by the Greeks and Romans, *Dii Averrunci,* and Ἀποτρόπαιοι. The prophet, alluding to this opinion, saith, that the evil spirits the heathens worshipped can neither do good nor hurt: they cannot do good, because they are naturally evil; neither can they do hurt any farther than God is pleased to permit them: beside that the images, to whom their exterior worship is paid, are dead and insensible things, that cannot help themselves, much less any body else. (See Jer. x. 5.) And, therefore, as it is God only that can *make peace and create evil,* (Isa. xlv. 7.) all worship is due to him alone.

Ver. 24. *Behold, ye are of nothing.*] Of no use or value: so the phrase is used Job xiii. 6. where we read *physicians of nothing* in the Hebrew; but our translation rightly renders the words, *physicians of no value.* Idols are often called in the Old Testament *ellilim,* i. e. *nothings,* and vanities and lies, to shew that they are not what they pretend to be, but are only senseless images, and the representations of dead men. (See 1 Cor. viii. 4.)

And your work of nought.] Whatever oracles or predictions you pretend to give out are cheats and lies. (See ver. 29.)

Ver. 25. *I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name.*] Cyrus is described as coming from the east, ver. 2. and here he is represented as coming from the north and the east too, because his father was a Persian, and his mother a Median. (See the note on xxi. 7.) Media lay northward of Babylon; accordingly the army which Cyrus led against Babylon is described as coming out of the north, (Jer. l. 9. 41.) because it chiefly consisted of Medes. (See note on xiii. 17.)

Shall he call upon my name.] Cyrus made public profession of his belief in the great *God of heaven and earth,* (Ezra i. 2.)

And he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.] The words may better be rendered, *He shall come and tread down princes like mortar,* and *as a potter treadeth clay.* (See ver. 2. xlv. 1, &c. compare Psal. xviii. 42.)

Ver. 26. *Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?*] Upon such an evident prediction of an event that was not to be fulfilled till near two hundred years afterward, God, in a triumphant manner, demands which of the idols could shew any such token of his divinity.

And before time, that we may say, He is righteous?] *i. e.* His claim to divinity is just. (See xliii. 9.)

Yea, there is none that sheweth; yea, there is none that declareth; yea, there is none that heareth your words.] None of the idols can give you an answer, or seems to regard what you say: just as Baal gave no answer to the importunate clamours of his priests. (See 1 Kings xviii. 29.)

Ver. 27. *The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give unto Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.*] The verse may better be translated thus, *I that am the first* [*i. e.* the Author and Disposer of all things: see ver. 4.] *will give unto Zion and unto Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings,* saying, *Behold, behold them: i. e.* Behold the wonderful works which God hath wrought for you: or, Behold thy people returning to their ancient habitations. (Compare xl. 9.)

Ver. 28. *For I beheld, and there was no man,* &c.] If one were to look about and make the strictest inquiry, there would not be found a man among the idol-priests or prophets, that was able to return an answer to any question that is asked him. Images are elsewhere called *dumb idols.* (See Habak. ii. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 2.)

Ver. 29. *Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing.*] See ver. 24. The Septuagint render the latter part of the sentence, *They that make you are vain:* for the true reading in the Greek is not Πλανῶντες, as the common editions have it; but Πλάσσοντες, as the learned Dr. Grabe hath observed in his dissertation, de Vitiis LXX. Interpr. p. 55.

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CHAP. XLII.

ARGUMENT.

The chapter begins with a character of Christ, of his meekness and gentleness, and his success in calling the gentiles. Afterward the prophet upbraids the Jews for their blindness and incredulity, and foretells the judgments that they should bring upon them.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold.*] The following prophecy is applied to Christ by St. Matthew, (xii. 18.) and cannot, with any show of probability, be expounded of any other person. The Septuagint understand it of Israel, or the Jewish nation, and read the text thus: *Jacob is my son or servant, I will uphold him; Israel is mine elect, my soul doth choose, or accept him.* They probably took this text to be parallel with xlix. 3. But the gloss of theirs is rejected by St. Matthew, though in most other places the evangelist follows that translation. If we should try to explain this prophecy of Cyrus, as Grotius doth, and his *echo*, Mr. White, allowing him to be a deliverer of the Jews; yet in what sense can he be styled the *light of the gentiles?* (ver. 6.) He is taxed with cruelty by several historians, and it is not likely that the people were much easier under his government, than when they were subjects to the Babylonian monarchy. Beside that, *a light to the gentiles* signifies one that should enlighten their minds, and instruct them in the truth; and in that sense Mr. White himself explains the phrase in the parallel text, xlix. 6. I conclude, then, that the natural import of the words, as well as the authority of the New Testament, do plainly determine this and many other texts here and in the following chapters to an evangelical sense: the Holy Spirit taking occasion, from the deliverance of the Jews out of their captivity, to give the prophet a view of a more glorious redemption, which should be accomplished by the Messias.

My servant, whom I uphold.] Christ is often called God's servant by Isaiah: (see xlix. 3. 5. l. 10. lii. 13. liii. 11.) as he is also by Zechariah, (iii. 8.) as being *sanctified and sent into the world* upon a message of the highest importance, that ever any person was employed about; and this title agrees very well with those many declarations our Saviour made of his *coming into the world to do the will of him that sent him:* (see John iv. 34. vi. 38. xiv. 31.) and it is, perhaps, in this respect that St. Paul saith, *Christ took upon him the form of a servant,* (Philip. ii. 7.) God is said to *uphold him* here, and *to hold his hand,* ver. 6. because his person was under the particular care and protection of Providence: (see John viii. 29. xvi. 32.) and, as the evangelist observes, none of the designs of his enemies against his life could take effect, till *his hour was come,* (John vii. 30. viii. 20.)

Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.] Christ is emphatically styled God's *beloved,* and the *son of his love,* (Matt. iii. 17. John iii. 35. Eph. i. 6. Colos. i. 13.)

I will put my Spirit upon him.] See the notes on xi. 2. lxi. 1.

He shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles.] He shall make known God's laws and judgments to them. (See ver. 4.)

Ver. 2. *He shall not strive, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets.*] He shall instruct those that oppose themselves with all meekness and gentleness; he shall patiently *endure the contradictions of sinners against himself,* and not in an angry or clamorous manner vindicate himself against their calumnies.

Ver. 3. *A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.*] He will have a tender regard for afflicted consciences, and such as are bowed down under the burden of their sins; and where the least spark of grace appears, he will not quench it, but take the utmost care to keep it alive and improve it. After this example, St. Paul exhorts the pastors of the church to *restore those who have been overtaken in a fault with the spirit of meekness,* (Gal. vi. 1.)

He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.] By this method he shall make the truth and justice of his cause appear against all gainsayers, and obtain a complete victory over his adversaries; to which sense St. Matthew reads the sentence, *till he send forth judgment unto victory;* expressing the sense rather than the words of the original.

Ver. 4. *He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he hath set judgment in the earth.*] We may reasonably suppose, that this prophecy relates to the propagating of the gospel in the world, as that work was carried on, not only by Christ, but also by his messengers. For Christ himself was *not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;* (Matt. xv. 24.) and, consequently, could be a *light to the gentiles* only as he commissioned others to preach the gospel to them. (See Ephes. ii. 17.) And taking the words in this comprehensive sense, they import, that our Saviour would not be discouraged at the difficulties he or his apostles were like to meet with in the discharge of their office, but would still continue unwearied in well-doing, till at last they should surmount all opposition, plant judgment and truth in the earth, and make the remotest parts of the world own their dependance upon him as their Lord, and submit to his laws.

And the isles shall wait for his law.] By the *isles* are meant the *gentiles.* (See the note on xi. 11.) In what sense they may be said to wait for Christ's law, see the note on lx. 9.

Ver. 6. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.*] I, who am God Almighty, have called thee to this high dignity, to fulfil my righteous purposes. (See xli. 2.) And in order to that end, I will sustain and defend thee: (see the note upon ver. 1.) and I am able to make my words good, because all things subsist by my word and decree, and all men owe their being and preservation to me, (ver. 5.)

And give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles.] This can in no tolerable sense be applied to any but Christ, who is called the *Angel of the covenant,* Mal. iii. 1. and was the *Mediator of the new covenant,* into which both Jews and gentiles were to be admitted. (See Jer. xxxi. 31.)

Ver. 7. *To open the blind eyes.*] Compare Acts xxvi. 18. which place seems to be a paraphrase upon this verse.

To bring out the prisoners from the prison, &c.] To free those from the chains of their sins who were the captives of Satan. (Compare lxi. 1. Rom. viii. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 19.) To the same sense we may best explain that

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difficult text in St. Peter, (1 Pet. iii. 19.) concerning the *spirits in prison, to whom Christ is said to have preached* by the ministry of Noah; understanding it of those wicked people of the old world who were under the bondage of sin and corruption, and whom the Spirit of Christ, who was in the prophets from the beginning of the world, (see 1 Pet. i. 11.) endeavoured to reclaim by the ministry of Noah; who was *a preacher of righteousness,* (2 Pet. ii. 5.) and for the space of a hundred and twenty years, (see Gen. vi. 3.) *while the ark was preparing,* exhorted the world to repentance, for fear the *flood should come and sweep them all away:* God's Spirit all that time *striving with men,* and trying to reclaim them.

Ver. 8. *I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*] My name JEHOVAH denotes me to be the only true God, and I will assert my honour by vindicating the cause of my church and people, and not suffer my truth to be extinguished, nor false gods and false ways of worship to usurp that glory which is due to myself alone. (Compare xlviii. 11.) And this God did in an extraordinary manner, by the publishing of the gospel, which gave a fatal blow to the heathen idolatry. By *another* is meant a strange or false god, the word *god* being understood. (See Psal. xvi. 4. and compare Isa. xliii. 12.)

Ver. 9. *Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare.*] The punctual accomplishment of my former predictions, ought to give credit to what I foretell now, though it seem a new and a strange thing to you.

Ver. 10—12. *Sing unto the Lord a new song,* &c.] An exhortation to all the inhabitants of the earth both far and near, and even the most barbarous people, such as were the Arabians who dwelt in Kedar: (see Psal. cxx. 5.) all of them are exhorted to give glory to God, for his wonderful mercy in making himself known to the gentile world by the gospel. (Compare xliv. 23. xlix. 13. lv. 12. Psal. xcvi. 11, &c. xcviii. 4, &c.) The expressions here, and in the parallel texts, denote the joy to be so great and universal, that even the inanimate parts of the creation are said to be affected with it, and are exhorted to bear a part in this general chorus.

Ver. 13. *The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy* [or his *zeal*] *like a man of war,* &c.] God is described here as rousing up his indignation against his enemies, which had for some time lain asleep, and whetting his courage like a man of war, through a sense that his honour now lies at stake, (compare lix. 17.) and falling upon his adversaries with the utmost fury.

Ver. 14. *I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself,* &c.] God had been long silent, and not interposed in behalf of his own cause: (compare Psal. lxxxiii. 1.) and this his forbearance had increased the presumption of his enemies; he declares now that he could no longer contain himself, no more than a woman in the pangs of travail can forbear crying out; but he must give vent to his just resentments for the injuries offered to himself and his oppressed people, by bringing some exemplary punishment upon their oppressors. When men's provocations come to a great height, God is represented, in Scripture, as if his patience were quite tired out, and he could no longer forbear punishing them. (See Jer. xv. 6. xliv. 22.)

Ver. 15. *I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs,* &c.] As God's mercy is represented by *pouring water upon the thirsty ground:* (see xxxv. 6, 7. xliv. 3.) so his wrath is described as if it were a *consuming fire,* which parches up every thing, and reduces it to barrenness. (See ver. 25. of this chapter, and l. 2. and Zech. x. 11.) This was literally fulfilled in Cyrus's taking Babylon; when, in order to it, he drained the river Euphrates, by cutting several new channels to carry off the water, and marched his army through it into the city. (See the note on xliv. 27.)

Ver. 16. *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not,* &c.] If we understand the words of the people's return from captivity, they import, that God would provide means for their restoration which they did not think of, and would remove all impediments that might lie in the way of their return. (Compare xl. 4. Jer. xxxi. 9.) In like manner God will enlighten the world by his gospel, and reduce men into the ways of truth, notwithstanding all the opposition that inveterate error and prejudice can make to the contrary.

Ver. 17. *They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images,* &c.] This must relate to that destruction of the heathen images and idolatrous worship, which followed upon the settlement of Christianity in the Roman empire; and may receive a farther accomplishment, as the truth of the gospel shall more and more prevail in the world. (See the note on i. 29.) The words cannot be said to receive their just completion in the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy by the Persians: for that turn of affairs gave no check to idolatry, the Persians being as much strangers to the true God as the Babylonians. Indeed, Strabo gives this testimony to the Persians, Πέρσαι ἀγάλματα καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἱδρύονται, *the Persians set up neither images nor altars;* (lib. xv. Geograph.) but yet they represented the Divine Majesty by the external symbol of fire.

The phrase of being *turned back,* signifies any disappointment, being a metaphor taken from the discomfiture of forces in war. (See Psal. lxx. 3.)

Ver. 18. *Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind.*] The prophet, speaking still in the person of God, now turns his discourse to the Jews, and upbraids them with their blindness and incorrigibility under all the means of instruction which had been afforded them. To this evil temper they were to ascribe all those judgments God had already inflicted upon them, which should at last end in a total captivity; and should have still more astonishing effects upon their rejecting the Messias. (Compare vi. 10, 11. and see the notes upon that place.)

Ver. 19. *Who is blind, but my servant?*] The prophets often upbraid the Jews with blindness, in not considering and laying to heart what they said to them from the mouth of God. (See Jer. v. 21. Ezek. xiii. 2.)

Or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?] This may be understood of some of the prophets; (compare xliv. 16.) several of whom were unfaithful in their office, and irregular in their lives. (See xliii. 17. Jer. v. 31. xxiii. 14.) The expression may comprehend the priests too, who are called likewise the *messengers of the Lord,* (Mal. ii. 7.)

Who is blind as he that is perfect?] That should be so by his profession. The word is *meshullam* in the Hebrew;

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from whence the Arabic *Mussulman* is derived, a title the Mahometans give to themselves.

Ver. 21. *The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake,* &c.] The verse might be translated plainer thus: *The Lord took delight in this people for his righteousness' sake; he hath given them an excellent law, and thereby made them honourable.* (Compare Deut. iv. 6—8.) Their law, if they would have kept close to it, would have been both their ornament and defence.

Ver. 22. *But this is a people robbed and spoiled,* &c.] A description of their miserable condition, when their city was taken, their country left desolate, themselves made captives and slaves, or else forced to hide themselves in dens and caves, and even there in danger of being laid wait for and catched by the enemy, without any body to plead for them, or assert their liberty.

Ver. 23. *Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken, and hear for the time to come?*] Who among you captives, will take warning by the judgments you feel already?

Ver. 24. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers?*] First to the Assyrians, and afterward to the Babylonians, who are called spoilers, xxi. 2. xxxiii. 1.

Ver. 25. *Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about.*] This was literally fulfilled when the Chaldean army took their city, and burnt both that and their temple, 2 Kings xxv. 9. (Compare likewise the 13th verse of this chapter.)

Yet he knew it not; and it burnt him, yet he laid it not to heart.] To *know* signifies sometimes the same as to consider. (See Hos. vii. 9. and the note upon xxviii. 19.)

CHAP. XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

After the threatenings mentioned at the latter end of the foregoing chapter, God here revives his people with comfortable promises, and assurances that he will never utterly forsake them, but will do such miracles for their deliverance, in aftertimes, as shall obscure the memory of those which he wrought for them heretofore. Towards the conclusion, he renews his expostulations with them for their ingratitude and neglect of his service, which will be justly punished with the destruction of their temple, and depriving them of the opportunities of public worship.

Ver. 1. *BUT now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not.*] *God created thee for his glory,* as it is explained ver. 7. 21. to be his peculiar people: so God's elect are called *the work of his hands,* xxix. 23. xlv. 11. lx. 21. And those God *will never utterly forsake,* (Psal. cxxxviii. 8.) By Jacob and Israel are meant the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the first place, as below ver. 22. 28. and above xli. 8. though it is probable that many of the promises mentioned here and in the following chapters, relate to that general restoration of the Jews so often spoken of by the prophets.

I have redeemed thee,] Out of the house of bondage, to be my peculiar people; and have ever since exercised a very particular providence over you; and have abundantly testified my care of you.

I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.] I have made a particular choice of thee for my peculiar people, and singled thee out from the rest of the world; (see Exod. xxxi. 2.) and ever since have treated thee with uncommon instances of kindness and familiarity. When a person of great dignity calls an inferior by his name, it is a token of a particular intimacy, and doing him a great deal of honour. (Compare xlv. 4. xlix. 1. Exod. xxxiii. 12.)

Ver. 2. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee—when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.*] I will deliver thee when thou art in the greatest straits and difficulties. To *pass through fire and water,* is a proverbial expression, to signify being exposed to all kind of dangers. (See Psal. lxvi. 12.)

Ver. 3. *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.*] This most interpreters understand of that diversion which the Egyptians, the Jews' allies, in conjunction with Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, gave to Sennacherib's forces, when they were just ready to fall upon the Jews. (See xxxvi. 9. and notes upon xviii. 1.) If we take the words in this sense, we must understand the Cush, or Ethiopia, mentioned in the thirty-seventh chapter, of Arabia, because it is joined here with Seba, which is part of that country. (See likewise xlv. 14.) It is certain that Cush sometimes signifies Arabia, though not always, as Bochart maintains. If we do not approve of this explication, this verse must relate to some historical passage not recorded elsewhere in Scripture. Some, indeed, would refer the place to the destruction of the Ethiopians under Asa: (2 Chron. xiv. 12.) but I take those not to have been Arabians (and such probably are meant here), but Ethiopians properly so called, because they are joined with Lubims, 2 Chron. xvi. 8. who certainly are Africans.

Ver. 4. *Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.*] The Chaldeans and their forces. (See ver. 14.)

Ver. 5, 6. *I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west,* &c.] This may have partly been fulfilled in the return of the Jews from Babylon, and other countries under that monarchy; but withal they import some more general restoration of that nation: (see xi. 11, 12.) or else we may interpret the words of the gathering together of God's elect into one body. (See Eph. i. 10. and the following verse here, and the note upon liv. 7.)

Ver. 7. *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory.*] Every one that is called by the name of God's servant. (See lxiii. 19. James ii. 7.) The expressions denote the bringing the gentiles into the church, and making them *fellow-heirs, and of the same body* with the Jews; for he *hath created them too for his glory,* and to *shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light,* (1 Pet. ii. 9. and compare xlix. 6. Amos ix. 12. John xi. 52.) The conversion of the Jews, and the bringing the fulness of the gentiles into the church, will be coincident in time, and each of these events will help to advance and carry on the other. (See the notes on lxvi. 12. 19.)

Ver. 8. *Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*] The old translation, published under king Henry VIII. expresses the sense more plainly thus, *Bring forth the people which is blind, and yet hath*

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eyes; which are deaf, although they have ears. By which are meant the heathen idolaters, who, like the images they worship, *have eyes and see not,* (Psal. cxv. 8.)

Ver. 9. *Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this?*] God makes the same challenge to the idolaters and their gods, which he did xli. 21, 22.

Or let them hear, and say, It is truth.] If they cannot make good their own pretensions, let them hear what proof I have to allege on my side, and acknowledge that what I say is truth.

Ver. 10. *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen.*] God's people and his prophets will always bear witness to his truth, who have received such pregnant proofs of his Divinity. (See 1 John v. 10.) By *my servant* is eminently meant the Messias; (see xlii. 1.) who is expressly called *God's witness,* lv. 4. (Compare Rev. i. 5.) although all God's messengers are in an inferior degree his witnesses, being *set for the defence and confirmation* of his truth. (See John i. 7. Acts i. 8.)

Before me there was no god formed.] An ironical expression, alluding to the forming or making of idols. (See xliv. 10.)

Ver. 12. *I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you.*] The sense might be plainer expressed thus, *I have shewed* [these things] *and not any strange god among you.* The word *god* is here understood, as it is xlii. 8. and Psal. xvi. 4.

Ver. 13. *Yea, before the day was I am he.*] Before all time, I am still the same. (Compare Psal. xc. 2.)

Ver. 14. *For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans.*] The preter-perfect tense is here used for the future. (See xxi. 2. xli. 3.) For your sakes I will send Cyrus to conquer Babylon, and make captives both of their nobles and people; or else the prophet may be supposed to direct this and the following discourses to the Jews who were in captivity.

Whose cry is in their ships.] Who glory in the number of their ships, with which they carry on a great trade upon Tigris and Euphrates. So the Septuagint and the Vulgar Latin understand the place. Others explain it of the Chaldeans flying to their ships for refuge against the forces of the enemy, who had surprised their city; or of their being sent prisoners on ship-board by the conqueror.

Ver. 16, 17. *Thus saith the Lord, who maketh a way in the sea,* &c.] Who led his people safely through the Red Sea, and overthrew Pharaoh and his army that pursued them.

Ver. 18, 19. *Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing.*] The new wonders I will do for you shall obscure the memory of the old ones. (See Jer. xxiii. 7, 8.)

Ver. 19. *I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.*] As of old I conducted my people through the wilderness, so that they wanted no sort of accommodation, either for meat or drink: (see Deut. viii. 15, 16.) so now I will give as pregnant proofs of my presence with them, when I return their captivity. (See xli. 18, 19.)

Ver. 20. *The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness,* &c.] There shall be such plenty of water, that the beasts which dwell in the wilderness shall be refreshed by it, and shall join with my people in making their thankful acknowledgments for these miracles of my mercy. (See the note on xlii. 10, 11.) The *dragons* and *owls* are elsewhere joined together, as creatures which frequent solitary and desolate places. (See Job xxx. 29. Micah i. 8. and the notes upon xiii. 22. of this prophecy.) The verse alludes to God's miraculous supplying the Israelites with water in the wilderness. (See note on xli. 17, 18.)

Ver. 21. *This people have I formed for myself.*] See above, ver. 1. 7.

Ver. 22. *But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*] The prophet, in this and the following verses, assigns the causes of the Jews' captivity, which were chiefly their forsaking the worship of the true God; not calling upon him in their trouble, but applying themselves to idols for help, and performing God's service in a careless manner, as if it were a tedious and unprofitable burden. (See Mal. i. 13.)

Ver. 23. *Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices.*] The *burnt-offerings* were those which were all burnt or offered upon the altar, called here the *lambs* (our English reads the *small cattle*) of *thy burnt-offerings,* a lamb being always offered for the daily burnt-offering, (Exod. xxix. 38.) The *sacrifices,* properly so called, were those offerings, part of which belonged to the priest, or was eaten by those that offered the sacrifice, after the fat had been offered upon the altar. (See Lev. iii. 16. iv. 31. vii. 25. 33.) God complains here that he had not been honoured either of these ways: the meaning of which complaint is, that although the Jews were punctual in offering sacrifice (for, i. 11. he speaks of the multitude of their sacrifices as a burden to him), yet they did not perform this service with a devout mind; just as God saith, (Amos v. 25.) *Have ye offered to me sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness?* That is, did you do it out of a religious principle, or a sincere regard to my honour? No; because, as it follows, you were fond of the idolatry you brought with you out of Egypt. To the same sense are those words of Zechary, (vii. 5.) *Did ye at all fast to me, even to me?*

Or else the words of the text may relate to those idolatrous times, in the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, when the temple-service quite ceased, and the house of the Lord was shut up; (see 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.) or else profaned by having an idol set up in it, and idolatrous worship performed there, (2 Kings xxi. 7.)

I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.] My service has not been burdensome or expensive to thee. The offering here spoken of is the *mincha,* or bread-offering, for so the word should rather be rendered than *meat-offering,* as our English translates it; for it answers to the Οὐλοχύται, and the *mola,* or *fartum,* of the Greeks and Romans. This offering always accompanied the other sacrifices, and had frankincense laid upon it. (See Lev. ii. 2. 15.) These expressions countenance the latter interpretation of the foregoing words, and seem to import the discontinuance of the public worship in the temple: for to the same purpose it follows;

Ver. 24. *Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money.*] To make the sweet incense, which was daily offered upon the altar, set apart for that purpose. (See Exod. xxx. 7, 8. 34. 36. xl. 27. Ecclus. xxiv. 15.)

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But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.] Instead of the service due to me from thee, thou hast made me undergo a sort of bondage by thy wicked practices, which have brought an ill report upon my name and religion; (see Ezek. xxxvi. 20.) and have quite tired out my patience. (Compare Amos ii. 13. Mal. ii. 17.)

Ver. 26. *Put me in remembrance; let us plead together,* &c.] Put me in remembrance of thy good deeds, if thou hast any thing to allege in thy own behalf: I should be glad if thou couldest acquit thyself of the crimes laid to thy charge.

Ver. 27. *Thy first fathers have sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.*] Your ancestors, reckoning from Adam downward, have been sinners, and you have trod in their steps. (Compare Ezek. xvi. 3.) And your prophets and teachers, who ought to have been guides to the people, have led them into sin and error. (See the note upon xlii. 19.)

Ver. 28. *Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary.*] I have suffered the Babylonians to profane my sanctuary, to abuse the chief priests, and pollute whatsoever is sacred. (Compare xlvii. 6. Lament. ii. 6, 7. iv. 14.)

And have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.] Made them a proverb of execration and reproach to all the neighbouring nations. (Compare Psal. lxxix. 4. Jer. xxiv. 9. Dan. ix. 16. Zech. viii. 13.) The words are addressed to the Jews, as if they were already in captivity. (See ver. 14.)

CHAP. XLIV.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter begins with comfortable promises after the former threatenings, as the last did. The prophet then proceeds to arm them against idolatry, upon the same grounds and arguments as he did chap. xl. and exhorts them to put their whole trust in God, who would certainly deliver them by Cyrus, whom he foretells by name above a hundred years before he was born.

Ver. 2. *THUS saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb.*] He speaks of the Jewish people under the character of a single person: and as God hath sometimes designed certain persons for particular offices from their birth and conception, (see xlix. 5. Jer. i. 15.) so he set apart the posterity of Abraham to be his people from the very original of the family.

And thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.] Jesurun is a name given to the Jews by Moses, Deut. xxxii. 15. it signifies *upright,* because they were called to be a holy people to the Lord.

Ver. 3. *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,* &c.] God's blessings are often represented under the metaphor of rivers and streams, which water ground and render it fruitful. (See the note on xxx. 25.) And the latter part of the verse explains what blessings are here intended, *viz.* the plentiful effusion of God's Spirit, which is mentioned by the prophets as the peculiar character of the gospel-times. (See liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 27. Joel ii. 28.) And the pouring out such abundant measures of grace and mercy, especially upon the ignorant and unbelievers, is usually set forth under the metaphor of watering barren land. (See xi. 9. xxv. 7. xxx. 25. xli. 18. and the notes upon these two last places.)

Ver. 4. *And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.*] They shall flourish, as if they were planted in rich meadows, or by the banks of rivers. (Compare Psal. i. 3.)

Ver. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob.*] This relates to the increase of the church by the accession of the gentiles. (See ver. 3.)

And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.] Some render it, *Another shall write upon his hand, I am the Lord's:* as if the expression alluded to the custom of soldiers receiving a mark upon their hands, to signify to what commander they belonged. See Dr. Spencer, de Legib. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 14. sect. 1. where he observes, that idolaters often had a mark or character of the god they worshipped, imprinted upon their hand or shoulder; in allusion to which custom, it is said of the worshippers of antichrist, that they *receive his mark in their hand,* (Rev. xiii. 16. xiv. 9.)

Ver. 7. *And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people?* &c.] God, who is the *first and the last,* (ver. 6.) claims to himself the ordering and disposing of all the affairs of the world, from the time that he created man upon it; or from the time that he chose Abraham and his family to be his peculiar people: over whom he hath all along exercised a particular providence, and hath from time to time foreshewed what should befal them, which accordingly hath come to pass. An instance of prescience which none of the idols can pretend to. (Compare xli. 4. 22. xliii. 9. xlv. 21. xlviii. 3.)

Ver. 8. *Fear ye not, neither be afraid.*] Do not distrust my care and providence over you. (See ver. 21.)

Have I not told it thee from that time?] The Hebrew particle *meaz* should be translated *from the beginning,* or *of old,* as our translators themselves render it in this prophecy, xlviii. 3. 5. Psal. xciii. 2. Prov. viii. 22. and so it should be translated in other places of this prophecy, particularly xvi. 13. xlv. 21. xlviii. 8.

Ye are even my witnesses.] See note on xliii. 10.

Ver. 9. *And their delectable things shall not profit.*] Their *delectable* or *pleasant things* (as the word *hamudim* is elsewhere rendered) are their images, upon which they laid out all the cost they could, to make them look rich and glorious. (Compare Dan. xi. 38.)

And they are their own witnesses: they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.] The makers of images are sufficiently convinced that their idols are senseless things: which one would think should make them ashamed of their folly in worshipping them.

Ver. 11. *Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen, they are of men,* &c.] The time will come when all the craftsmen in the art of idol-making, and all the zealous assertors of this kind of worship, shall be ashamed and confounded at their own folly, to think that the work of men's hands could have any thing of divinity in it. (Compare xlii. 17. xlv. 16. Psal. xcvii. 7.)

Ver. 12. *The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers.*] To give an account of the original of images, is sufficient to expose men's

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folly in worshipping them. (See before, xli. 6. Jer. x. 3.) This argument the ancient apologists often insist upon, to shew the absurdity of the heathen idolatry; but none of them more elegantly than Minutius Felix, in the following words: "Quando igitur hic [Deus] nascitur? ecce funditur, fabricatur, scalpitur: nondum Deus est. Ecce plumbatur, construitur, erigitur: nec adhuc Deus est. Ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur: tunc postremo Deus est, cum homo illum voluit et dedicavit." Which runs thus in Mr. Reeve's excellent translation: *But when, pray, does it commence Divine? behold, it is cast, fashioned, and filed: well, it is no god yet. Behold, it is soldered, put together, and set upon its legs: well, it is no god yet. Behold, it is bedecked, consecrated, prayed to: then, then at last, behold a complete god, after man hath vouchsafed to make and dedicate him.*

Yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth, &c.] This shews this idol-maker to be but a man, (ver. 1.) subject to the same infirmities and necessities with other men, and that his god is not able to preserve his life. Some think the words express the eager zeal of the workman, who denies himself necessary refreshment, that he may finish the work he hath undertaken.

Ver. 13. *The carpenter stretcheth out his rule,* &c.] In this and the following verses, the prophet, with great smartness of argument, exposes the absurdity of image-worship: for what an absurdity is it for a man to dress his meat and make his god with the same stick of wood? or to think that a piece of timber hath any more Divinity in it than it had before, because it is fashioned and carved into the figure of a man?

This way of arguing does not suppose that the heathens took their images for gods, for that is a contradiction in terms, and as absurd as to think, that a man and his picture are the same thing: but the design of the prophet's argument is, to shew the absurdity of setting up images as the resemblances of God, and the representative objects of worship; or the supposing them to have some Divine power lodged within them: inasmuch as they have no qualities that answer such a character, being endued neither with power, life, nor understanding; and are indeed nothing, but what they appear to be, bare, senseless matter, wood, or stone. Besides that, nothing is a greater dishonour to God, than to suppose him like the image of a corruptible creature. For the same reason the author of the book of Wisdom makes the worship of images more inexcusable than the worship of the heavenly bodies, or of the elements, because these are worshipped for their own sakes, those upon the account of their representation, (Wisd. xiii. 2. 10.)

Ver. 14. *Which he strengthens for himself among the trees of the forest.*] Which he had picked out as fit for his purpose, and nourished up till it came to its due growth.

Ver. 15. *Yea, he maketh a god.*] Of the remaining part. (See ver. 17.)

Ver. 16. *With part thereof he eateth flesh.*] He dresseth flesh in order to eat it, (ver. 19.)

Ver. 18. *For he hath shut their eyes.*] The old translation expresseth the sense better, *their eyes are stopped:* for the verb transitive is often taken in an impersonal sense. (See xxii. 19.) So Exod. vii. 13. we read, *He hardened Pharaoh's heart;* which is explained in the next verse, by *Pharaoh's heart was hardened.* Thus, Isa. ix. 6. the Hebrew reads, *He shall call his name Wonderful,* &c. which our English translation rightly renders, *His name shall be called Wonderful,* &c. Again, Luke xii. 20. it is in the Greek, *They require thy soul of thee:* which our interpreters translate, *Thy soul shall be required of thee.*

Ver. 20. *He feedeth on ashes.*] As ashes have no nourishment, so his zeal and devotion shall not avail him.

A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?] Vulgar errors and prejudice have perverted his understanding, that he cannot discern the most gross and palpable falsehood, nor free himself from the delusions of it. The old English translation does very well express the sense of this verse: *Thus doth he but lose his labour, and his heart which is deceived, doth turn him aside,* &c.

Ver. 21. *Remember these* [things] *O Jacob,* &c.] The prophet applies his discourse against idols to those of the captivity, and exhorts them seriously to reflect upon what he had said, when they should come to live among the idolaters.

Ver. 22. *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions,* &c.] The preter-perfect tense may here stand for the future, as in many other places. (See xliii. 14.) God encourages them to trust in his mercy, by assuring them, that upon their repentance he will so fully forgive their sins, that no sign of his displeasure shall appear, and they shall never rise up in judgment against them any more, just as a cloud vanisheth when it is dispersed by the sun or the wind. The same metaphor is used by Demosthenes, in a sentence which Longinus does very much admire, περὶ ὕψους, cap. 34. Τοῦτο τὸ ψῆφος τὸν τότε τῇ πόλει παραστάντα κίνδυνον, παρελθεῖν ἐποίησεν ὥσπερ νέφος. *That vote made the danger which before hung over the city vanish like a cloud.* This general promulgation of pardon, is a *preaching of the gospel beforehand,* as St. Paul speaks, and is designed, as many of the promises in the prophets are, to prepare men's minds for the receiving it. (See Acts xiii. 38, 39. Luke xxiv. 47.)

Ver. 23. *Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth,* &c.] An apostrophe to the whole creation, to join in praising God for his wonderful mercies; which shews that they are such, as all the world are some way concerned in; and such are only the mercies of the gospel, for which the earth ought to rejoice, because the benefits of it are extended to all mankind, and the angels in heaven will sympathize with men below, because they joy in the conversion and salvation of mankind, and in their being reunited to that blessed society of which Christ is the head: see Coloss. i. 20. and compare with the text here, xlii. 10—12. Psal. xcvi. 11, &c. xcviii. 4, &c. which places are, by all Christian interpreters, expounded of the times of the gospel. But Mr. White puts in his exception to this exposition, because Jacob and Israel *are mentioned here, who have the least share in this redemption.* But I think St. Paul hath long ago answered this objection, when he tells us, that the *children of the promise are counted for the true seed of Israel,* (Rom. ix. 8.) We will allow Mr. White, that the redemption of the Jews from captivity may be primarily intended here as a type of a more general redemption to be accomplished by Christ; but to confine the words to the former sense, exclusive of the latter, is neither

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agreeable to the genuine import of the words, nor to the general sense of the Christian church.

Ver. 25. *That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad,* &c.] God taketh pleasure in confounding the wisdom of the wise men of the world, and baffling the fine schemes of human policy, especially those forbidden arts of divination, which the Chaldeans so much valued. (See xlvii. 13. Jer. l. 36.)

Ver. 26. *That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers.*] But as he discovers the folly and madness of such false prophets, so he punctually fulfilleth the predictions of his own prophets. The title of God's *servant* does eminently belong to the Messias in this prophecy, who was *that Prophet that should come into the world:* (see note on xlii. 1.) but is in a lower sense ascribed to other prophets, and may here be understood of Isaiah himself: (compare xliii. 10. l. 10.) and God's *messengers* are as well those prophets that lived before Isaiah's time, such as are Hosea, Joel, and Amos; as those who followed, such as Jeremy, Micah, Ezekiel, &c. who all foretold the restoration of the Jews.

Ver. 27. *That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers.*] God opened a way for Cyrus to take Babylon, by suggesting to him a method for draining the river Euphrates, and making it passable for his army. (Compare Jer. l. 38. li. 36.)

Ver. 28. *That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,* &c.] I will make him my instrument in gathering my people together, and leading them home as a shepherd does his flock. Kings and princes are often styled *shepherds* in Scripture. (See Jer. vi. 3. xlix. 19. l. 6. Zech. xi. 8. 16.) So in Homer Agamemnon is often called Ποιμὴν λαῶν; *the shepherd of the people.*

This is one of the most remarkable prophecies of Scripture, where Cyrus *is called by his name,* as the prophet expresseth it, xlv. 4. above a hundred years before he was born. In like manner Josiah is prophesied of by name, above three hundred and twenty years before his birth. (See 1 Kings xiii. 2.)

CHAP. XLV.

ARGUMENT.

The subject is much the same with that of the former chapter, concerning Cyrus's commission from God, and the successes he will bless him with: then follows an exhortation to the people, to wait God's time for their deliverance, who is not unmindful of them, and will magnify his own glory in their salvation. In the latter part of the chapter, the prophet seems to carry his views to another *restoration* of his people at the *latter times,* when they shall be converted to the *Christian faith,* and return from their several dispersions.

Ver. 1. *THUS saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus.*] God gives the title of *anointed* to Cyrus, the same which is usually given to David and other kings of the Jews, who were God's immediate deputies, to shew that he was raised up to be an immediate instrument of Providence, in restoring the Jews' captivity. Many of the ancient fathers understand this verse of Christ; which opinion was partly occasioned by some of the copies of the Septuagint, which read Κυρίῳ for Κύρῳ, which reading is followed by Barnabas in his epistle, (chap. 12.) as also by Tertullian, Cyprian, and others. But that the deliverance here foretold was a figure of the redemption to be accomplished by Christ, plainly appears from several passages in this chapter, and particularly from ver. 8. 17. 20, &c. And as our learned Mr. Thorndike hath observed, Cyrus may as well be a figure of Christ as Nebuchadnezzar. Antiochus Epiphanes, the prince of Tyre, and other idolatrous and persecuting tyrants, are spoken of in the prophets, as types and forerunners of antichrist. (See his book De Jure finiend. Controvers. cap. 4. p. 58.)

Whose right hand I have holden.] See xli. 10.

And I will loose the loins of kings.] As *girding,* or *girding the loins,* signifies enduing with strength; (see ver. 5.) so *loosing the loins* is taking away men's strength or courage, and leaving them no power to make resistance. (See Dan. v. 6. and the notes upon Isa. v. 27.)

To open before him the two-leaved gates.] To give him admittance into cities and palaces. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 2. *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight.*] See the note on xl. 3.

[*I will break in pieces the gates of brass.*] To every side of the great wall which encompassed Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar made five-and-twenty gates of solid brass, amounting in all to a hundred. See Dr. Prideaux, ad ann. A. C. 570.]

Ver. 3. *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.*] Such as are laid up safe, and never see the light. Grotius hath observed out of Pliny, what immense riches Cyrus found in his conquests: the Babylonian empire being of ancient fame and greatness, and Asia that part of the world which was most remarkable, at that time, for its riches and luxury.

That thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.] That I, the Lord, who have so highly favoured thee, (see the note on xliii. 1.) and have mentioned thy name so long beforehand, as the peculiar instrument of my providence, am the only true God, and Israel is my people.

Ver. 4. *I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*] Beside the name of Cyrus, I have given thee the surname of my *anointed,* and my *shepherd,* and I have taken this particular notice of thee, not for thine own sake, who art a stranger to the true God, but for the sake of my people Israel, that thou mayest be their deliverer.

Ver. 5. *I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.*] It is I that endued thee with strength for war, (see Psal. xviii. 39.) though thou art ignorant of me. Cyrus was bred among idolaters, but afterward was instructed by the Jews in the knowledge of the true God, as appears from Ezra i. 2.

Ver. 6. *That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me.*] My interposing so visibly in behalf of my own people, and returning their captivity by such unexpected means, will convince the heathen part of the world that I am the only true God. (See Psal. cii. 15, 16.)

Ver. 7. *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil.*] The latter part of the sentence explains the former: *light* being often put for happiness, and *darkness* for adversity. The sense is, that all the vicissitudes of good or ill success are to be ascribed to Provi-

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dence: God sets up one kingdom, that of Cyrus, and pulls down another, the Babylonian monarchy.

[*I form the light, and I create darkness.*] Dr. Prideaux hath given a clear account of this sentence: "These words (saith he) being directed to Cyrus king of Persia, must be understood as spoken to the Persian sect of the Magians, who held light and darkness, good and evil, to be the supreme beings, without acknowledging the great God who is superior to them both." (Script. Connect. par. i. p. 215. edit. 8vo.) In opposition to this opinion, the prophet instructs king Cyrus, that light and darkness, good and evil, are under the direction and disposal of Almighty God.]

Ver. 8. *Drop down, ye heavens, from above,* &c.] A passionate wish of the people to see those blessed times in which heaven and earth should conspire to illustrate God's righteousness (or faithfulness), and advance man's happiness. (Compare Psal. lxxxv. 11.) This was in some measure verified upon the return from captivity, when the laws and worship of God were re-established; but must certainly look farther than that deliverance, even to him that was to be the Lord *our righteousness,* and the *author of eternal salvation.* (See the note upon ver. 1.)

Ver. 9. *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth,* &c.] In reference to that earnest wish, mentioned ver. 8. the prophet warns the people not to be too impatient, but to wait God's time for the accomplishing this redemption. Men may contend or argue with their equals, saith he, with those who are made of the same clay with themselves, but they must not presume to inquire of God the reasons of his proceedings, or find fault with his works of creation or providence, as if they were not wisely contrived or well-timed.

He hath no hands.] The expression either means, he had no hand in making it, or, he hath no contrivance, it is not well put together.

Ver. 10. *Woe to him that saith to his father, What begettest thou?*] The same question varied: he who findeth fault with second causes, does indirectly blame God Almighty, the original cause of all things; for the instruments of providence are all in God's hands, and they act according to those measures which he directs.

Ver. 11. *Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons; and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.*] Some read the latter part of the verse by way of interrogation, *Do you ask of me?* &c. and take it in the same sense with the two former verses, for a proof of their presumption, who were too inquisitive into the reasons of God's purposes. But I rather understand it with our English translation in a favourable sense; which is confirmed by the introduction, *Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel:* a preface which always ushers in some gracious promise. (Compare xliii. 1. 3. 14. xliv. 6. xlviii. 17.) So I take the words to import thus much: That although God be not obliged to render an account of his proceedings to his creatures; yet he is graciously pleased to comply with their curiosity, and to resolve any questions which are proposed concerning the final issue of his people's captivity. Nay, he represents himself as ready to serve them, and to do every thing that can be desired in favour of his elect, those whom he calls here his *sons, and the work of his hands.* (Compare xxix. 23. Jer. xxxi. 9.)

Ver. 12. *I have made the earth, and created man upon it,* &c.] The words assure us, that God is able to make good whatever he promises. (Compare xlii. 5. xliv. 24.)

Ver. 13. *I have raised him up in righteousness.*] This is to be immediately understood of Cyrus, whom God raised up to be the instrument of executing the Divine justice upon the Babylonians, and fulfilling God's mercy towards the Jews. In this particular he was a type of Christ, as hath been observed upon xli. 2.

He shall build my city.] He shall give orders for the building it, (Ezra i. 2.)

[*He shall build my city.*] Cyrus only gave order for the building of the temple; (Ezra i. 2.) but the consequence of that would be the rebuilding of the city, as being the metropolis of the kingdom, and the place to which the whole nation were to repair at their solemn feasts. Compare xliv. 28.]

And he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.] Princes are commonly governed by politic considerations, and expect a reward for their labour. (See Ezek. xxix. 18.) There being nothing of that kind to move Cyrus to restore the Jewish captivity, that resolution could proceed only from a Divine impulse. The words may likewise be fitly applied to the freedom of that redemption which Christ hath obtained for us. (Compare lii. 3.)

Ver. 14. *The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans,* &c.] This verse cannot be understood of Cyrus's conquests, as Grotius and some others do explain it; for the words *thee* and *thine* so often repeated in this verse, are all of the feminine gender in the Hebrew, and consequently must be understood of Jerusalem, the *city* mentioned ver. 13. Therefore I conceive the place is principally meant of the flourishing state of the church (often described under the figure of a city) when the gentile world should come into it, bring in their riches to the adorning and support of it, and submit themselves to its government, as being the only seat and temple of truth. (Compare xviii. 7. xxiii. 18. xlix. 23. lx. 9, 10. 14. 16. Psal. lxviii. 30, 31.)

The words may be supposed in some degree verified, in Cyrus's devoting the tribute coming out of those rich provinces of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, to the building and service of God's temple. Some of the succeeding Persian monarchs settled revenues upon the temple for the offering sacrifices for themselves and their families. (See Ezra vi. 10.) The same was done in aftertimes by Alexander the Great, and several of the Syrian and Egyptian kings, (see 2 Maccab. iii. 2, 3. v. 16.) and some of the Roman emperors, as may be seen in Josephus, particularly lib. ii. de Bell. Jud. cap. 17. and Philo's Legatio ad Caium.

Ethiopia probably means here Arabia, being joined to Seba. (See the note on xliii. 3.)

Men of stature.] The Chaldee paraphrast explains it by *men of merchandise,* such as deal in weights and measures; which sense agrees very well with the Hebrew, and better with the scope of the place than the common interpretation.

In chains they shall come over.] They shall confess themselves to be conquered, and yield submission. The phrase alludes to the custom of carrying captives in triumph with chains about their necks: see Psal. cxlix. 8. which Psalm

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both Jews and Christians interpret of the days of the Messias.

Ver. 15. *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself*, &c.] This may be understood with respect to the unsearchableness of God's counsels, spoken of before, ver. 9, 10. in which sense our first translators at the Reformation understood it, and render the verse, *O how profound art thou, the God and Saviour of Israel!* Or else it may be spoken with regard to the times when God hid away his face, and seemed to neglect his people. (Compare lvii. 17. Psal. xliv. 24.) Whereas he doth now openly shew himself in their favour, to the shame and confusion of idolaters, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 16. *They shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.*] See the note on ver. 6. This and many other passages, where the prophet foretells the confusion and destruction of idolatry, have a plain aspect upon the overthrow of the heathen idolatry, upon the planting of the gospel.

Ver. 17. *But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.*] This must relate to the times of the gospel. (See the notes upon ver. 18. 23.)

Ver. 18. *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth—he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.*] The words are commonly explained to this purpose, that if God did not create the world to lie empty and uninhabited, much less will he suffer the lot of his own inheritance, Judea, to lie desolate, but will certainly restore its captivity: the establishing a political government being sometimes expressed by creation: (see the note on li. 16.) but I think this sense hardly comes up to the full import of the words. Mr. Mede, p. 578. of his Works, hath observed, that at the eleventh verse God condescends to declare to his servants the *things that are to come:* and St. Paul hath applied the twenty-third verse to the day of judgment; (Rom. xiv. 11.) so that, in that learned person's judgment, the scope of the place directs us to explain it of that *new heaven* and *new earth wherein dwells righteousness*, which, St. Peter tells us, we are to expect at the end of the world, *according to God's promise;* (2 Pet. iii. 13.) which promise must relate to some of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of that matter. This *earth*, the text saith, *God created not in vain;* that is, not to be *subject to vanity*, as the present earth is, (see Rom. viii. 20.) but to be inhabited by the *mystical Israel*, who shall be *saved with an everlasting salvation*, (ver. 17.) These are the same who are called the *escaped of the nations*, (ver. 20.) and those that are *saved out of all the ends of the earth*, (ver. 22.) What is said also in ver. 14. hath some relation to the latter times, as may be gathered by comparing it with some of the parallel texts referred to in the notes.

Ver. 19. *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.*] I have delivered my laws and will plainly and perspicuously, not in dark and dubious terms, such as the heathen oracles were delivered in, which were spoken out of caves and grottos.

I said not, Seek ye me in vain.] The worship of idols is often condemned as vanity and lost labour. (See the following verse, and chap. xliv. 20. Jer. x. 5.)

I the Lord speak righteousness.] My laws are all of them holy, just, and good: whereas the profoundest mysteries of the heathen gods consisted in impure and obscene rites.

Ver. 20. *Draw near together ye that are escaped of the nations.*] Ye Jews, that are returned home from the several parts of the world, whither ye have been dispersed, assemble yourselves together, and return solemn thanks to God for your deliverance; and consider what proofs he hath given of his power, in protecting his people, sufficient for ever to confound and silence the idols and their worshippers.

Mr. Mede, p. 915. of his Works, supposes those *that are escaped of the nations* here, to be the same with the *nations of them that are saved*, or escape, mentioned Rev. xxi. 24. and thinks this interpretation is confirmed by ver. 22. of this chapter; *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* (See likewise ver. 18.)

Ver. 21. *Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time?*] A general challenge to the idols, to give such proofs of their divinity, by foreshewing things to come. (Compare xli. 1. 22. xliii. 9. xliv. 7.)

Who hath told it from that time?] Or rather, *from the beginning.* (See note on xliv. 8.)

Ver. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*] This relates to the calling of the gentiles, and especially to the bringing in the fulness of the gentiles at the end of the world. (See Rom. xi. 25. Matt. xxiv. 14. and the following note.)

Ver. 23. *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return*, &c.] That is, it shall be fully accomplished. (Compare lv. 11.) Here God confirms by an oath the truth of what was foretold, ver. 22. That the time should certainly come when all the world should give glory to him, by paying him solemn worship and adoration, and by swearing or professing allegiance to him. (See note on xix. 18.) And this shall be verified both in the gentiles, (ver. 22) and in the Jews, (ver. 25.) who, after the fulness of the gentiles is come in, shall all be saved, as St. Paul tells us, Rom. xi. 25. 26.

The same apostle applies this text to the day of judgment, (Rom. xiv. 11.) when it will receive its utmost accomplishment; not only wicked men, but even apostate spirits, being summoned to appear before the tribunal of God and Christ. (Compare Philip. ii. 10.)

We may farther observe, that what the prophet speaks here in the person of God, is applied by St. Paul to Christ, *i. e.* to the second person of the blessed Trinity. See like instances in vi. 1. compared with John xii. 41. in viii. 14. compared with Rom. ix. 33. and 1 Pet. ii. 8. in Psal. cii. 25. compared with Heb. i. 10. Many more such instances might be given, and all of them are plain proofs of the Divinity of Christ, and that the prophets of the Old Testament had all along an eye to the times of the New, and spoke of the Messias as God. (See more of that matter in the notes upon xlviii. 16.)

Ver. 24. *Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*] This likewise is very applicable to Christ, who is called the Lord *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 5. and *is made unto us righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Ver. 25. *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified.*] The sense is the same with the beginning of the former verse: to be *justified*, is a term taken from the forms of

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law, and signifies to be acquitted, or pronounced innocent, and come off victorious in a cause. (See Psal. li. 4.) Here it is opposed to that *shame* denounced against the obstinate, ver. 24.

CHAP. XLVI.

ARGUMENT.

The chapter begins with foretelling the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, who is particularly described, ver. 11. From thence the prophet takes occasion to insult over the Babylonish idols, who could neither preserve themselves nor their worshippers: and he exhorts the Jews still to trust in God, who had, from the beginning of their nation, nourished them with the tenderness of a parent; and who, by foretelling things at the greatest distance, gave an undeniable proof that all events were at his disposal.

Ver. 1. *BEL boweth down, Nebo stoopeth.*] Two principal idols of the Babylonians: Bel is the same with Baal, as Selden conjectures, (de Diis Syris, Syntagm. i. cap. 2.) Nebo gave name to several of their kings, as Nabonassor, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. (See note on xxxix. 1.) The image of these deities were carried in triumph by the Persians, as part of the spoil, as it was usual for conquerors to do, in token of a complete victory. (See Grotius upon the place.) Livy records it as an instance of the moderation of Fabius Maximus, that, when he retook Tarentum, he would not suffer the statues of their gods to be carried with the rest of the plunder, but said, "Relinquamus Tarentinis Deos iratos." (Lib. xxvii. cap. 18.)

Ver. 2. *They stoop; they bow down, they could not deliver the burden.*] The deities, which were worshipped in the idols, could not deliver their own images, which became burdensome to those that carried them away, so that the gods themselves must own that they are conquered too. The expressions in this and the former verse allude to the custom of carrying idols in procession, which was a solemn piece of worship paid to them; whereas now they were carried about by their enemies, by way of contempt and derision.

Ver. 3. *Hearken to me, O Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel.*] The same which are called Jacob and Israel, xliii. 1. (see the note there) and xliv. 1.

Which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.] The expressions allude to the carrying of idols, either in procession, (ver. 7.) or in triumph, (ver. 1.) Instead of being carried by his worshippers, as the helpless idols are, God carries and supports his people, as a father does his children in his arms. (See Deut. i. 31.)

Ver. 4. *And even to your old age I am he.*] Or, *I am the same God:* so the phrase is translated, Psal. cii. 27.

Ver. 6. *They lavish gold out of the bag,* &c.] The same argument against idolatry, which was made use of xl. 19. xli. 6. xliv. 12. It was very proper to repeat this argument often, for the sake of those that were to live among the Babylonians, where authority and custom would powerfully recommend idolatry. (Compare Jer. x. 1, &c. Baruch vi.)

Ver. 8. *Remember this, and shew yourselves men.*] By making use of your reason: whereas the idolaters are as senseless as the images which they worship. (See Psal. cxv. 8.)

Ver. 9. *Remember the former things of old.*] Remember what I have formerly done for you, both in Egypt and after your settlement in Canaan.

Ver. 10. *Declaring the end from the beginning,* &c.] The same argument of God's power and providence, which is insisted on xliv. 7. xlv. 21.

Saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.] God's foretelling the most distant and casual events, is a sensible proof of his overruling providence.

Ver. 11. *Calling a ravenous bird from the east.*] A description of Cyrus, whom God is said to have *raised up from the east,* (xli. 2. 25.) Conquerors that overrun and ravage whole countries, are elsewhere compared to birds of prey. (See Ezek. xvii. 3, 4. Esdr. xii. 11.)

The man that executeth my counsel.] See xliv. 28. xlv. 13.

From a far country.] Cyrus's army was made up of confederates of very distant nations. (See Jer. l. 41.)

Ver. 12. *Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness.*] Or, *ye stubborn-hearted,* as it is better translated in the Bishops' Bible published under queen Elizabeth; such as do not think it reasonable to acquiesce in my promises, which whosoever believeth, it *shall be counted to him for righteousness,* (Gen. xv. 6.)

Ver. 13. *I bring near my righteousness, and my salvation shall not tarry.*] I will give visible instances of my mercy and fidelity, and place them before the eyes of those that are most insensible of them; and the salvation of my people shall not be delayed beyond the prefixed time appointed for the accomplishment of it. (Compare Habak. ii. 3. and see the note upon xiii. 22.)

And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.] Or, *I will give salvation in* [or to] *Zion, and my glory to Israel:* as the translation just now mentioned renders the words.

CHAP. XLVII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet had intimated the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy in a few words, at the beginning of the last chapter; and here he foretells it more plainly, and denounces it as a just judgment upon that government for its cruelty and pride: the unexpectedness of such a calamity adding great weight to it, being such a surprising turn of affairs, as none of the Chaldean arts of divination could foresee, or be able to prevent.

Ver. 1. *COME down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground.*] Sit in a mournful and disconsolate posture. (See note on iii. 26.) The prophet calls her the *virgin daughter of Babylon,* as one that had never yet been conquered. (See note on xxiii. 12.)

There is no throne.] The pomp and state of thy empire is come to an end. (Compare Psal. lxxxix. 44.)

Ver. 2. *Take the millstones, and grind meal.*] From being mistress of kingdoms, thou shalt become a mean slave; thy captives shall be set to grind, which was reckoned the lowest degree of drudgery. (See Exod. xi. Judg. xvi. 21.) Such was the *pistrinum,* or turning the mill, among the Romans.

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Uncover thy locks.] Thy hair shall hang about thy ears, without being dressed up, or adorned with a diadem: thou shalt lose all that finery and those ornaments in which thou didst pride thyself, as marks of thy state; and the persons of the greatest quality shall be despoiled of their gaiety, and carried captives in a mean and ragged condition.

Make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.] Those who are bred to the nicest degree of tenderness shall be stripped naked, and forced to go barefoot over rivers, when they are led captives by the Persians.

Ver. 3. *Thy nakedness shall be discovered.*] See note on iii. 17.

I will take vengeance; I will not meet thee as a man.] Thou shalt feel the most dreadful effects of my anger, and I will shew no humanity or pity towards thee. The latter part of the sentence sounds literally thus, *I will not meet a man*, which seems to be a hypallage, or an inverted sentence, for *a man shall not meet me; i. e.* no man shall put a stop to my fury, by endeavouring to succour thee: nor shall any intercession for thee prevail with me. (See Jer. vii. 16. xv. 1. Ezek. xiv. 14.) The verb *pagang* is sometimes used for making intercession. (See liii. 12.)

Ver. 4. *As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name.*] See Jer. l. 34.

Ver. 5. *Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness.*] Silence and darkness are opposed to that noise and gaiety which are seen in rich and populous cities, which being destroyed are reduced to a melancholy silence and solitude. The same thing is expressed in Jeremy, by *taking away the voice of mirth, and the light of the candle*, (Jer. xxv. 10.) Babylon hath been for many ages a heap of ruins; for the city Bagdad, commonly taken for the same place, is situate three days' journey from it. (See the note upon xiii. 19.)

Ver. 6. *I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thy hand.*] Whereas I formerly appropriated Judea to myself, and distinguished it from all other countries by peculiar marks of my favour and protection, now I laid it open to the insults of idolaters, and suffered them to profane the city and sanctuary which was called by my name.

Thou didst shew them no mercy.] God often punishes the persons, whom he makes instruments of his vengeance upon others, for those very things which they did by his appointment, because they exceeded their commission, and were more intent upon satisfying their own ambition and cruelty, than upon executing his commands. [So Isa. x. 7. the prophet speaking of the Assyrian, whom he calls *the rod of God's anger*, adds, *howbeit he meaneth not so;* his intent is not to execute God's will, *but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations;* he intends only to satisfy his revenge and ambition.] See Zech. i. 15. where God saith of the Babylonians, *I was but a little displeased* [with my people] *and they helped forward their affliction.* For the same reason God saith, Hos. i. 4. that *he will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu*, though Jehu was expressly commanded to smite the house of Ahab, (2 Kings ix. 7.) But he exceeded his commission, when he slew all Ahab's *great men*, or officers of state; and when he had destroyed the family of Ahaziah, (2 Kings x. 11. 14.)

Upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.] Thou hast shewed no pity upon old folks, whose age commands respect, and whose feebleness deserves compassion. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 50.)

Ver. 7. *And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever,* &c.] I shall always be the chief city and mistress of the world (see ver. 5.) and shall never know any change of fortune: whereas the consideration of the instability of all worldly greatness, should have induced thee to use thy success with moderation.

Ver. 8. *Thou sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me.*] Words full of insolence and blasphemy, whereby she arrogated that self-sufficiency to herself, which belongs to none but God. (See xlv. 5.)

I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.] Cities are commonly described as the mothers of their inhabitants, and their kings and princes as their husbands. And when they are bereaved of these, they are said to be widows and childless. (See iii. 26. xlix. 21.) As Babylon, in the pride of her heart, thought herself exempt from the calamities of fortune; so mystical Babylon is described as guilty of the same pride and carnal security, (Rev. xviii. 7.) And those arrogant pretences of the Roman church to infallibility, indefectibility, and supremacy, too nearly resemble the description of Babylon in this and the foregoing verse.

Ver. 9. *But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day.*] The great strokes of Providence are described as coming suddenly and unexpectedly, *as a thief in the night:* that *when men shall say, Peace, peace, then sudden destruction shall come upon them:* (see 1 Thess. v. 3. compare Luke xvii. 27—29.) thereby to deter men from indulging their carnal security, and to put them in mind of that continual dependance they ought to have upon God. (See Dan. iv. 30, 31. 35. 37.)

For the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the abundance of thine enchantments.] By *sorceries* may either be meant those forbidden arts of divination, mentioned more particularly ver. 13. or else the wicked schemes of worldly policy, whereby great and potent kingdoms oppress and undermine lesser states and principalities. (Compare Nahum iii. 4.)

Ver. 10. *For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, None seeth me.*] Thou hast thought that thy cunning and policy would still support thee, and that God did not regard thee, and would never call thee to an account for all thine enormities.

Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee.] The words may mean, either thy skill in the arts of human policy; or else thy pretended foreknowledge of future events by the positions of the heavens; the Chaldeans being famous all the world over for their skill in astrology.

Ver. 11. *Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it ariseth.*] With all thy skill in fortune-telling, thou shalt not be able to foresee the evil that is coming upon thee, or to prevent it.

Ver. 13. *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels.*] The several projects thou hast tried to divert thy calamities, are all lost labour. (Compare lvii. 10.)

Ver. 14. *Behold, they shall be as stubble.*] They shall have no more power to withstand the calamities coming upon them, than stubble hath to resist the violence of the fire. (See xl. 24. xli. 2.)

There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.] They shall be utterly consumed, so as to be reduced to ashes, and not so much as a coal left that may give warmth or afford comfort. (Compare xxx. 14.)

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Ver. 15. *Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth.*] The words may more plainly be rendered thus: *Thus shall thy merchants deal with thee, with whom thou hast laboured, even from thy youth.* By *merchants* are meant either the dealers in the deceitful wares of divination and astrology: (compare ver. 12.) or, in general, any of those cunning factors (so the word is used Hos. xii. 7.) who have contributed, by their counsels or their traffic, to maintain the grandeur of the Babylonish empire. (Compare Rev. xviii. 11, 12. 15. 23.)

CHAP. XLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet applies himself to the Jews as under the state of captivity, and reproves them for their stubbornness and refractory temper, notwithstanding the many evidences God hath given of his providence over them: a pregnant instance of which was his raising up a succession of prophets among them, to give them notice of such events as none of the heathen idols could foretell. This obstinacy of theirs, the prophet tells them, was the occasion of their captivity, and exhorts them to be reformed by their afflictions, and fit themselves for that deliverance which God hath promised them.

Ver. 1. *HEAR ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel.*] Who value yourselves for being descended from Jacob, and called after his name, but do not shew yourselves to be true Israelites by your deeds.

And are come forth out of the waters of Judah.] The derivation of posterity from the head of a family, is often compared to the streams that issue forth from a spring or fountain. (See Numb. xxiv. 7. Psal. lxviii. 26. Prov. v. 16. 18.)

Which swear by the name of the Lord.] To swear by the name of God is a solemn part of Divine worship, and an appealing to him as the true God, and sovereign Judge of the world. (See xix. 18. xlv. 23. Deut. vi. 13. Psal. lxiii. 11.) In like manner, the swearing by idols was the owning them for true gods: (see Zeph. i. 5.) for which reason the Jews were forbidden to make mention of the names of the heathen gods. (Exod. xxiii. 13.)

Ver. 2. *For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel.*] This vain confidence of the Jews, and relying upon their external privileges, is elsewhere reproved. (See Jer. vii. 4. Micah iii. 11. Rom. ii. 17.) Jerusalem had the title of *holy city* given to it, as being the place of God's residence, where he had placed his name. (See lii. 1. Psal. xlviii. 1. lxxxvii. 3. 2 Kings xxi. 7.)

Ver. 3. *I have declared the former things from the beginning.*] See the note on xliv. 7. The *former things* are opposed to *new things*, ver. 6. (compare xlii. 9.) and so they may point at the former prophecies relating to the two *confederate kings*, (chap. vii.) and to Sennacherib, (chap. x.) as the *new things*,—and *things to come*, as they are called xli. 22. relate to the Babylonian captivity, and their return from thence, as they were figures of the gospel-times.

I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.] They punctually came to pass at the time foretold, even when there was no likelihood of such an effect being produced. So we read, (Mal. iii. 1.) *The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple; i. e.* precisely at the time appointed by God. (See the note on xlvi. 13.)

Ver. 4. *For I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew.*] The Jews are elsewhere reproved as a *stiff-necked people.* (See Exod. xxxii. 9. Acts vii. 51.) The metaphor is taken from oxen that draw back, and refuse to put their necks under the yoke. (Compare Nehem. ix. 29. Zech. vii. 11.)

Ver. 5. *I have, even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, My idol hath done them.*] God ordained a succession of prophets to foretell the most remarkable events that should happen to the Jews, on purpose to prevent their ascribing them to idols: a suggestion which their infidelity and obstinacy might prompt them to allege. (See 2 Kings i. 3.)

Ver. 6. *Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it?*] The old translation, published under king Henry VIII. has given the sense of the words very perspicuously, thus, *Thou heardest it* [before], *and, behold, it is come to pass: and shall not ye yourselves confess the same?* Some render the words thus: *If thou hast heard, foretell all this: would you not have declared it? i. e.* would not your idols have given out prophecies concerning these things, if they had foreknown them?

I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.] I have lately discovered to thee some new works of Providence, such as thou never wast before acquainted with, relating to thy deliverance out of captivity by Cyrus. (Compare xlii. 9. xliii. 19.)

Ver. 7. *They are created now, and not from the beginning.*] They are called *new things* in opposition to God's wonders of old time. (See the texts last cited.)

Even before the day when thou heardest them not.] The words may better be rendered thus, in conjunction with the former sentence: *They are created now, and not from the beginning, nor before the day,* (the same with *from the beginning*, see xliii. 13.) *nor hast thou heard them,* till I revealed them. Or thus, *nor before this day hast thou heard them;* making the copulative in the Hebrew word *veló* to be redundant.

Ver. 8. *Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened.*] The latter part of the sentence should be thus translated, *Nor was thine ear opened of old, or from the beginning,* as the particle *méaz* is translated twice in this very chapter, ver. 3. 5. (See note on xliv. 8.) The prophet persists in repeating what he had said in the foregoing verses, that it was God alone that could make known these events so long beforehand, and that he did it because he knew their proneness to idolatry, and therefore would take away any pretence that could be made of ascribing this foreknowledge unto idols. *To open the ear* is a Hebrew phrase, signifying to make known: (see l. 5.) the same thing is otherwise expressed by *revealing the ear:* see xxii. 14. 1 Sam. ix. 15. Job xxxvi. 10. where that phrase is translated by *opening the ear.*

For I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously.] The sense seems imperfect before these words, which may thus be supplied: *I did foreshew thee these things, because*

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I knew thou wouldest deal treacherously. The verb *bagad* does properly signify a wife being unfaithful to her husband: (see Jer. iii. 20.) and from thence it is applied to the sin of idolatry, which is often styled *spiritual whoredom,* as being a breach of that covenant which the Jews made with God as their king and husband. (See liv. 5. Jer. iii. 14. and Bishop Patrick's Preface to his Comment on the Canticles.)

And wast called a transgressor from the womb.] Thou wast addicted to idolatry from thy very infancy, from the very time thou livedst in Egypt. (See Ezek. xx. 8. xxiii. 3. 19. 27.)

Ver. 9. *For my name's sake will I defer my anger.*] See the note on ver. 11.

Ver. 10. *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver.*] Not with such a furious heat, as is requisite to melt down silver, for then thou wouldest have been utterly consumed. (See Jer. xxx. 11. Ezek. xxii. 20.)

I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.] I have took this method to purge thee from thy dross, and render thee a chosen people to myself. The words may be rendered, *I have tried, or proved thee in the furnace of affliction:* for the verb *bahar* is sometimes equivalent to *bahan.* (See Prov. viii. 10. x. 20.)

Ver. 11. *For mine own sake will I do it: for how should my name be polluted?*] God puts the people in mind, that the mercies he vouchsafes to them in restoring their captivity, are not due to their merits, but are wholly to be ascribed to his own goodness, and the regard he hath to his honour, which would suffer in the opinion of the heathen, if those that valued themselves for being his peculiar people should be utterly forsaken by him. (Compare lii. 5. Psal. lxxix. 10. Ezek. xx. 9. xxxvi. 20—22.)

And I will not give my glory to another.] I will not give occasion to the heathen to think that their gods are too powerful for me, which would more and more confirm them in their idolatry, and sacrilegious robbing me of mine honour. (See note on xlii. 8.)

Ver. 12, 13. *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he,* &c.] An exhortation to the Jews to hearken to the voice of that God who had called them from the rest of the world, and chosen them to be his peculiar people, and who alone is the Maker and sovereign Lord of all things. The word *called,* alludes to God's calling Abraham out of an idolatrous country and kindred to be his servant, (Gen. xii. 1.)

Ver. 13. *When I call them, they stand up together.*] As servants ready to execute my commands. (See xl. 26.)

Ver. 14. *All ye, assemble yourselves together; which among them hath declared these things?*] A general challenge to the idols and their worshippers, to bring proof that ever such a remarkable turn of providence, as that of the Jews' restoration, was foretold by any of the heathen oracles. (Compare xli. 22. xliii. 9. xliv. 7. xlv. 21.)

The Lord hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.] The prophet speaks of Cyrus, whom God made the peculiar object of his favour, and the conqueror of the Chaldeans, and deliverer of his people; wherein he was a type of the Messias. (See the note on xlv. 1.)

Ver. 15. *I, even I have spoken; yea, I have called him,* &c.] Compare xlv. 1, 2, &c.

Ver. 16. *I have not spoken in secret from the beginning.*] See xlv. 19.

From the time that it was, there am I.] The two first words in the Hebrew, *meneth hejothah,* may be translated, *before the time that this was* [declared, or foretold]. So the same particle in *mejom* signifies, xliii. 13. where our translators rightly render it, *before the day was:* so xviii. 2. *min hú* signifies *aforetime:* or thus, *Before the time that it happened, then I* [foretold], or *then I* [had a being], as the same words *sham ani* may very fitly be rendered, Prov. viii. 27. for the scope of that place is to shew the eternity of the Divine wisdom. And *missham* signifies *from that time,* Isa. lxv. 20. This interpretation will make the sense run clearer, to this purpose: I have not delivered my predictions in ambiguous terms, because I am from all eternity, and being present to all the successions of time, can clearly foresee those distant events which my providence produces.

And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.] The foregoing part of the verse shews that the words are spoken by God; and since it is here affirmed that the *Lord God hath sent him,* we can understand the words of none other but the second person of the blessed Trinity, who was sent into the world by his Father, and was anointed to his prophetical office by the Holy Spirit. (See xi. 2. xlii. 1. lxi. 1. compare Zech. ii. 10, 11.) Here, indeed, only the Divine nature of the Son of God is directly spoken of; but it is usual, in Scripture, to apply that to one part of his nature which properly belongs to the other, because of the *communication of properties,* as the schoolmen term it. Thus St. Paul saith, that the *Jews tempted Christ in the wilderness;* (1 Cor. x. 9.) meaning the Logos, who afterward assumed human nature, and was called the Christ. It need not seem strange that Christ is introduced speaking these words: for we find many other texts which are spoken of God in the Old Testament, applied to Christ in the New; to shew us, that almost all the prophecies of the Old Testament relate to the times of the gospel, and are to receive their utmost completion then. (See the note on viii. 14. xlv. 23.) And this will still appear more probable, if we consider that several passages in this chapter, as well as the general strain of these prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel, have a plain aspect upon some farther restoration of the church in the latter times, and its deliverance from that *mystical* Babylon described in the Revelation. (See xlv. 20. 22, 23. and the notes upon ver. 20. and 22. of this chapter.)

Ver. 17. *I am the Lord thy God who teacheth thee to profit.*] Who giveth thee laws for thy good, to direct thee in the right way.

Ver. 18. *Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*] Thou hadst then been as remarkable for virtue and holiness as for peace and prosperity: or *righteousness* may be taken as equivalent to happiness. (See note on lxii. 1.)

Ver. 19. *Thy seed also had been as the sand,* &c.] They had not been diminished by invasions, captivities, and other judgments.

Ver. 20. *Go ye forth of Babylon,* &c.] A Divine admonition to the Jewish exiles to depart out of Babylon with all speed, not to linger or make any delays out of kindness to the place, or fondness for the idolatries there practised:

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just so Lot was commanded immediately to depart out of Sodom, and not so much as *look behind him*, or shew any token of affection for the place, (Gen. xix. 17.) This admonition is renewed, lii. 11. repeated by the prophet Jeremiah, l. 8. li. 6. 45. and applied by St. John to *mystical* Babylon, Rev. xviii. 4. And the prophet orders this message to be published *to the ends of the earth*, which implies that it is a matter of general concern.

Ver. 21. *They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts*, &c.] The preter-perfect tense is here used for the future, a common figure in the prophets. (See note on xxi. 10.) The words import, that God will take the same care of his people in their return home from captivity, as he did in their passage from Egypt through the wilderness. (See note on xli. 18.)

Ver. 22. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*] This conclusion of the chapter relates to the reproofs and exhortations given at ver. 4. 8. 10. 17, 18.; and it is an admonition to the Jews to make a good use of the blessings here promised, or else they could not hope for any lasting peace or prosperity. But as several passages of this, the foregoing, and succeeding prophecies, have a farther aspect upon the future deliverances of the church, as hath been observed upon ver. 16. so I am apt to think these words have an eye upon the general restoration of the Jews so often mentioned in the prophets, which none of them will have a share in, but such as repent and reform. (See Ezek. xx. 34. 38.) The same admonition is given to the church with respect to the deliverance out of *mystical* Babylon, Rev. xvi. 15.

CHAP. XLIX.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet returns to the same subject he had been discoursing upon, from chap. xli. to the end of the forty-sixth; and takes occasion from the return of the Jewish captivity, which he had clearly foretold, ver. 20. of the foregoing chapter, to foreshew the great enlargement of the church in aftertimes, by the conversion of the Jews, and the coming in of the fulness of the gentiles. Mr. White, indeed, is of opinion, that in this, as well as many other parts of this prophecy, Isaiah had only the restoration of his own nation in view; but I cannot but be surprised to find, that any person who sets up for a literal commentator, can think that all those glorious things, which are spoken here of the city of God, can be literally fulfilled in the return of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when the condition of the nation was at best nothing near so flourishing as it had been in the days of David and Solomon.

Ver. 1. *LISTEN, O isles, unto me.*] See xli. 1.

The Lord hath called me from the womb.] Some persons have been designed by God for certain offices from their very birth, as Jeremiah was, (see Jer. i. 5.) and St. Paul, (Gal. i. 15.) and John Baptist, (Luke i. 15.) and Isaiah, if we understand these words as any way relating to himself: but it is in an eminent manner true of Christ, whom God hath in a peculiar manner *sanctified*, or set apart for his offices of king, priest, and prophet, and sent him into the world to execute the same. (See Luke i. 35. John x. 36.)

From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.] See the note on xliii. 1.

Ver. 2. *He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.*] The prophets are often described as the executioners of those judgments which they denounce against sinners: (see the notes on vi. 10. and compare Jer. v. 14. Hos. vi. 5.) and in this sense we may apply the expression to Isaiah, or any other prophet; but it is most remarkably true of Christ. (See the note on xi. 4.)

In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.] The phrase signifies being under God's immediate protection. (See li. 16.) This likewise was in an eminent manner verified of Christ. (See Psal. xci. 11. John viii. 29.)

He hath made me a polished shaft.] Another metaphor representing the efficacy of God's word, as spoken by his prophets and messengers.

Ver. 3. *And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in thee I will be glorified.*] If we follow this translation, which seems to express the Hebrew best, the words can be applied to none but Christ, as the head and representative of the church, the Israel of God, who was to *raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel:* (ver. 5, 6.) as, on the contrary, the word Christ sometimes is taken for the church. (See 1 Cor. xii. 12.) But some render the words thus, *Thou art my servant, Israel is he in whom I will be glorified by thee.* Concerning the title of servant, see the note on xlii. 1.

Ver. 4. *Then I said, I have laboured in vain—yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.*] The words contain an objection to what was affirmed, ver. 3. that God should be glorified by his ministry, which he here complains is altogether unsuccessful: however, his comfort is, that God is his judge, who will reward him according to the sincerity of his endeavours.

As the Hebrew *avôn* signifies both *sin* and the *punishment of it*, so *penulah* signifies both the *work* and its *reward;* it is taken here in the latter sense. (Compare xl. 10. lxii. 11.)

Ver. 5, 6. *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious*, &c.] There is a various reading in the Hebrew of this verse, which produces a different sense, according as the particle *lo* is read with an *aleph* or a *vau*. If we follow the first reading, which our translators prefer, the sense is, that although Christ's ministry be unsuccessful in gathering the Jews into the church, yet the preaching of his apostles should meet with better success among the gentiles, and should enlighten those that dwell in the remotest parts of the world. If we follow the other reading, the words will import, that God hath ordained *Christ to be a light to the gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel.* These words are applied by St. Paul to the preaching of Christ unto the gentiles, (Acts xiii. 47. xxvi. 23.) and cannot with any show of probability be understood of Isaiah, whatever Grotius or others pretend.

Ver. 7. *Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth*, &c.] The words describe the wonderful progress of the gospel, from small beginnings; that the author of it, from being the contempt of all the great men of the world, should come to be the object of their adoration. (See ver. 23.) This may in a lower sense be understood of that regard which Cyrus and other succeeding monarchs had for the Jewish nation and

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temple, (see the note on xlv. 14.) whereas during the captivity they had been the scorn of all their neighbours. (See Psal. lxxix. 4. Lament. ii. 15. Dan. ix. 16.)

Ver. 8. *Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee,* &c.] The first publishing of the gospel is that time which God pitched upon as a season of mercy, (see 2 Cor. vi. 2.) according to the decree which he had concerted with his Son from all eternity. Accordingly, when that fulness of time was come, God sent him into the world to be the Mediator of that new covenant, which he would make both with the Jew and gentile. (See xlii. 6.) If we suppose this verse to have any relation to the Jews' return from captivity, the sense will be, that the expiration of the seventy years was the time of grace, in which God determined to hear and answer the prayers of his devout servants, (see Psal. cii. 17.) and restore them to their native country, to repeople the land which lay desolate.

To establish the earth.] To order and settle it by good laws and government. (Compare Psal. xcvi. 10.)

To cause to inherit the desolate heritages.] If we expound the words in a spiritual sense, they imply the repairing what is decayed by ignorance and corruption, and making that fruitful which lay barren before. The gentiles are metaphorically described by the wilderness and ground that lies barren and uncultivated. (Compare xliii. 19, 20. xliv. 3. li. 3.)

Ver. 9. *That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth.*] See note on xlii. 7.

They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.] They shall not want any accommodation in their return home: they shall be as well provided for as a flock of sheep that want neither pasture nor water, though they should feed on the top of barren mountains. (See the following verse, and the notes on xxx. 25. xli. 18.)

Ver. 10. *They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them.*] The spiritual sense of this and the foregoing verse, imports a plentiful enjoyment of God's ordinances, (compare Amos viii. 11.) together with freedom from persecution. (See the notes on iv. 6. xxv. 4.) The words are applied by St. John to the heavenly state of the New Jerusalem; (Rev. vii. 16, 17.) it being usual with the prophets to describe the flourishing times of the church militant, by such expressions as properly belong to the church triumphant, because every advancement of God's kingdom in this world is a preludium, or earnest, of the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 11. *And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.*] Or rather, *My causeways shall be exalted:* the Hebrew word *mesillah* signifies such ways as are raised with stone in low and marshy grounds. So the sense is exactly parallel with that of xl. 4. *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be brought low.* (See the note there.)

Ver. 12. *Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and the west.*] See the note on xliii. 5, 6.

And these from the land of Sinim.] *From the south country,* the Vulgar Latin renders it, to answer to the north and west mentioned before: it may either mean Pelusium in Egypt, called *Sin,* Ezek. xxx. 15. or the wilderness of *Sin,* mentioned Exod. xvi. 1. both which lay southward of Judea.

Ver. 13. *Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth,* &c.] See the note on xliv. 23.

Ver. 14. *But Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken me,* &c.] The words of the Jews despairing under their captivity. (Compare Lam. v. 20. 22.)

Ver. 15. *Can a woman forget her sucking child?* &c.] God is often described as bearing a fatherly affection towards his people. (See Psal. ciii. 13. Mal. iii. 17.) But here the comparison is raised higher, and he speaks of himself as having the same tenderness for them as a mother towards the fruit of her womb. (Compare Jer. xxxi. 20. Hos. xi. 8.) God still retains that kindness for the posterity of Abraham, that he will never cast them off utterly. (See Rom. xi. 28, 29.)

Ver. 16. *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*] Thou art as dear to me, and as deeply imprinted in my memory, as if thy picture were drawn upon my hand, or engraven in a seal, and worn upon my arm, so as to be always in my sight. (Compare Exod. xiii. 9. Cant. viii. 6.) Some explain the phrase, as if it were a metaphor taken from an architect, who draws the model of a new building, so as to have it always lie before him: in like manner should the platform of their city be always before God's eyes, in order to the re-edifying of it.

Ver. 17. *Thy children shall make haste.*] To return homeward. Some render it, *Thy builders shall make haste,* in opposition to the *destroyers* mentioned in the following sentence. But the following verse favours the first interpretation.

Thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee.] See the same sense a little varied in the expression, ver. 19.

Ver. 18. *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament.*] The words allude to the affection that mothers have for their children, who pride themselves in them as their greatest ornament.

Ver. 19. *For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants.*] This must be understood either of the accession of the gentiles into the church, (see ver. 22, 23.) typified by Judea, repeopled after it had lain desolate: (see the note on ver. 8.) or else we may suppose the words point at some future restoration of the Jewish nation: for we do not find the catalogues of those who returned, recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, to answer this prophecy: nor did the Jews repossess the whole extent of Palestine after the captivity, or make that figure in the world which they had done in former times, and especially before the separation of the ten tribes.

Ver. 20. *The children thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other.*] Those which thou shalt have after thou hast been for some time in a desolate condition. (See liv. 1.)

Shall say again in thy ears.] Or rather, *Shall yet say in thine ears; i. e.* the time is yet to come when they shall say thus.

Ver. 21, 22. *Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these?* &c. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the gentiles,* &c.] In the former verse, Jerusalem is represented as in a surprise to find herself on a sudden replenished with inhabitants after an utter desolation: and in the latter, an account is given of this

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miraculous change, *viz.* that God would put it in the hearts of the gentiles, whither the Jews were led captives, to send them home again with all necessary provisions for their journey. (See Ezra i. 4.) This may yet receive a farther accomplishment. (Compare xi. 12. lx. 4.)

Ver. 23. *And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers.*] Cyrus, Artaxerxes, and other Persian monarchs, shewed signal favour to the Jews; and Esther, Darius's queen, one of their own countrywomen, saved the nation from utter destruction. But this prophecy was more remarkably fulfilled in the favours which Constantine and his mother Helen, and other Christian princes and princesses, have shewed to the church, taking it into their care and protection, and sheltering it under their government. (Compare Numb. xi. 12.)

They shall bow down to thee with their face to the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet.] To lie prostrate at one's feet was the highest act of adoration amongst the eastern nations: (see Gen. xlii. 26. 2 Sam. xviii. 28. Luke xvii. 16.) and is applied here to denote the great honour and deference which the Christian emperors and kings should pay to the church, submitting themselves to its laws, and owning themselves its disciples; it being the custom of disciples to sit at their masters' feet, and receive instructions from them in that posture. To the same custom the phrase of *licking up the dust of thy feet* may allude. (Compare xlv. 14. lii. 15. lx. 14. Rev. iii. 9.) It may not be impertinent to observe farther, the great honour and respect paid by the first Christian emperors and empresses to the bishops of the church, who always bowed down their heads to them, when they desired their blessing. (See Valesius's notes upon Theodoret, lib. iv. cap. 6.)

Ver. 24. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?*] An objection urging the seeming impossibility of rescuing the Jews from such a powerful enemy as the Babylonish empire, who had made an entire conquest over them.

Ver. 25. *For I will contend with him that contendeth with thee,* &c.] God answers this difficulty, by telling them, that he will take this matter into his own hands, and plead their cause with their enemies.

Ver. 26. *And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh,* &c.] Those that are allied to us, by country or kindred, or any other relation, are called *our own flesh.* (See Judg. ix. 2. 2 Sam. v. 1. Nehem. v. 5.) So the phrase here imports, that God will set these enemies of his people one against the other, and make them kill and destroy each other. (See note on ix. 20.) Accordingly, Cyrus first conquered a great many of the allies of the Babylonians, and made them serviceable in reducing the capital city of that empire.

CHAP. L.

ARGUMENT.

God encourages his people still to depend upon him, by assuring them, that he hath not rejected them, but their sins have constrained him to deal severely with them. And the prophet shews both his Divine commission to publish to them the glad tidings of redemption, and his readiness to discharge that office, whatever discouragements or ill treatment he might meet with upon that account, wherein he was an exact type or figure of Christ.

Ver. 1. *WHERE is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I put away?*] The covenant which God made with his people is commonly represented under the notion of a marriage-contract. (See note on xlviii. 8.) In allusion to this notion, God demands of the captives, who despaired of his mercy, (see xlix. 14.) to produce the bill of divorce which he had given to their mother: whereas, on the contrary, he was ready to receive her, whenever she would return from her idolatries, and other iniquities. (See Jer. iii. 1.)

Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?] Those that were poor used to sell their children, and sometimes themselves, to their creditors, for the discharge of their debts. (See Exod. xxi. 7. Nehem. v. 5. Lev. xxv. 39.) The same power masters had over their servants, (Matt. xviii. 25.) God tells them he had no occasion to exercise such a power over them, but it was owing to their own sins that they were made slaves to foreign nations. (Compare lii. 3. Psal. xliv. 12.)

Ver. 2. *Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?*] How comes it to pass, saith God, that, when I sent messages to you by my servants the prophets, there was no man would take any notice of them? (See Jer. xxxv. 15.) In the same sense Christ is said to *come and preach peace,* that is, by his apostles and ministers, Ephes. ii. 17.

When I called, was there none to answer?] Compare lxv. 12. lxvi. 4. Prov. i. 24.

Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, &c.] For a proof of his power, God appeals to the miracles he wrought in Egypt, (Exod. vii. 18.) at the Red Sea, and at Jordan, (Psal. lxxiv. 12—15.)

Ver. 3. *I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.*] The expressions allude to the Egyptian darkness; (Exod. x. 21.) sackcloth was the habit of mourners, and is put here for a dark or black colour. (Compare Rev. vi. 12.)

Ver. 4. *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.*] The prophet saith, that God hath appointed him to perform the office of an instructor and comforter to those that were weary under the yoke of captivity: wherein he was an exact type of Christ, whose office it was to speak comfort to those who were wearied under the burden of their sins, (Matt. xi. 28.)

He wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.] Every morning he putteth me in mind of the discharge of my office, as masters rouse up their scholars betimes to learn their lesson. The words may be rendered, *He wakeneth mine ear to hear, as scholars* [are awakened]: for the Hebrew *limmudim* signifies both teachers and disciples; and it is taken in the latter sense by our translators, viii. 16. If we take the word in this sense, the phrase which is translated *the tongue of the learned,* in the foregoing sentence, will signify *a docile or teachable tongue,* which obeys the dictates of its instructor. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 5. *The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious.*] He hath given me instructions for the discharge of mine office, and I immediately complied with his

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commands, and set about the execution of it. The phrase of *opening the ears* is explained in the notes upon xlviii. 8. Herein too Isaiah was a type of Christ. (Compare Psal. xl. 6—8.)

Ver. 6. *I gave my back to the smiters.*] The prophets generally met with very ill treatment from the men of their own times. (See Acts vii. 52.) And though we have no particular account of Isaiah's sufferings, yet it appears from this verse, that his lot was no better than that of his brethren; and the Jews have a tradition, that he was at last sawn asunder by the command of king Manasseh. The expressions of this verse were literally fulfilled in Christ. (See Matt. xxvi. 67. xxvii. 26.)

And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.] By way of contempt and reproach. (See Lam. iii. 30.) The Septuagint render the words, Σιαγόνας μοῦ εἰς ῥαπίσματα, *I gave my cheeks to blows:* which was literally fulfilled in our Saviour, Mark xiv. 65. John xviii. 22. where the evangelists used the word ῥάπισμα, as if they alluded to this prophecy.

Ver. 7. *Therefore have I set my face as a flint.*] So as not to be brow-beaten, or put out of countenance, by my adversaries. (Compare Ezek. iii. 8, 9.) It requires an extraordinary degree of courage to reprove popular vices, when their abettors are numerous and powerful.

Ibid. and Ver. 8. *And I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me?* &c.] God will stand by me and pronounce me innocent, and then I need not fear or be dismayed at the worst accusations the malice of mine enemies can suggest against me. Here is a solemn process or trial supposed, such as our Saviour underwent, whom God would in a signal manner justify, or acquit from that unrighteous sentence which men had pronounced against him. (See the note on xlv. 25.)

Ver. 9. *Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.*] Compare li. 8. Job xiii. 28. They shall quickly die, and all their wicked designs shall perish with them. (Compare li. 12.) Thus Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the chief priests, are long since perished, but Christ lives and abides for ever.

Ver. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord,* &c.] Let those that fear God, and reverently obey all the indications of his will made known to them by his prophets, though their present circumstances look never so dismal, and they have no glimmering of hope or comfort; yet let them continue to rely upon God, who in due time will visit them with light and salvation. The meaning of God's *servant* hath been already explained upon xliv. 26.

Ver. 11. *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks.*] Or, *that increase the flame,* as the Septuagint render the latter part of the sentence: for the Hebrew verb *azar,* whose original sense is to *bind,* signifies likewise to *increase* or *strengthen,* as Abraham à Schultens hath shewed in his Observat. Arab. in Genesin. cap. 2. The expression denotes those that seek for worldly comforts, and neglect those consolations which come from God: the prophet pursues the same metaphor which he had used in the foregoing verse.

Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.] Make your best of these your comforts, but I will forewarn you that you shall find yourselves sadly disappointed; you shall sink under your calamities, as a beast that faints under his burden, without any hopes of recovery out of them. (Compare xliii. 17.) *Walk in the light of your fire* is an ironical expression, like that of Christ, *Sleep on now, and take your rest;* (Matt. xxvi. 45.) and that of Amos, *Come to Beth-el, and transgress,* (Amos iv. 4.)

CHAP. LI.

ARGUMENT.

The chapter begins with an exhortation to the pious persons of the captivity, still to rely upon the promises of God, which shall be eminently fulfilled in Christ, (ver. 4, 5.) The prophet puts them in mind, that God had given them abundant proofs of his power and goodness when he delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt. Afterward the prophet bewails the miseries of Jerusalem, and tells her that God will take pity of her sufferings.

Ver. 1. *HEARKEN to me, ye that follow after righteousness.*] Compare ver. 7.

Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, &c.] These metaphorical expressions are explained in the following verse. The expressions may allude to the springs which issue forth from between the rocks. (Compare xlviii. 1.)

Ver. 2. *Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you.*] As God gave an original to your nation, from Abraham and Sarah, two persons past age for having children; so he could multiply their posterity, though they should be reduced to a small number.

For I called him alone.] The Hebrew word is *echad, one, i. e.* when he was but one single person, without child or family. Abraham is elsewhere styled *one,* as being singled out from the rest of his kindred to be the original or head of the Jewish nation. (See Mal. ii. 10. 15. Heb. xi. 12.)

Ver. 3. *He will comfort all her waste places; he will make her wilderness like Eden.*] A proverbial expression. (See Joel ii. 3.) This promise primarily relates to the peopling of Judea after it had lain waste during the captivity; but mystically implies the restoring truth and righteousness, when ignorance and corruption had overspread the face of the world. (See the note on xlix. 8.) This latter sense the following words plainly point at.

Ver. 4. *For a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.*] The latter part of the sentence may more properly be rendered, *I will cause my judgment to break forth for a light to the people:* for the verb *ragang,* as many other Hebrew words, has two contrary significations, (see the note on xxii. 18.) and signifies both to *rest* and to *break forth.* To this sense it may most conveniently be expounded, Jer. xlix. 19. where our translation reads, quite contrary to the design of the place, *I will make him suddenly run away from her:* whereas the scope of the text requires the words to be thus rendered; *I will stir him up, and make him run* (or seize) *upon her.* But to return to the text before us: the prophet speaks of such a law as should break forth and enlighten the most

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distant people, expressed by the *isles* in the next verse, which can be no other than the gospel, as will plainly appear by comparing this text with xlii. 4. 6. where it is said that Christ is ordained *to be a light to the gentiles, to set judgment in the earth,* and that *the isles should wait for his law.*

Ver. 5. *Mine arms shall judge the people.*] That power of God which shall accompany the preaching of the gospel. (Compare ver. 9. Psal. lxvii. 4. xcviii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 24.)

The isles shall wait upon me.] See the notes upon xi. 11. lx. 9.

Ver. 6. *For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment—but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*] When heaven and earth shall be dissolved, then is the time for fulfilling that righteousness and salvation, which I promise to my servants. (See 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13. compare Matt. xxiv. 35.)

Ver. 7. *The people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men.*] They that have the law of God deeply imprinted upon their minds, with the obligations lying upon them to obey it, and the advantages they will receive by the practice of it, will never be moved or drawn aside from their duty by the flouts or reproaches of the ungodly. (See Psal. cxix. 51, 52.)

Ver. 8. *For the moth shall eat them up like a garment.*] See the note on l. 9.

Ver. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord.*] The prophet, by an elegant figure, addresses himself to God, to stir up his strength, and exert it in behalf of his oppressed people, as he did in former times, when he delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage.

Art not thou it that hast cut Rahab.] Egypt is sometimes called by the name of Rahab: (see Psal. lxxxvii. 4. lxxxix. 10.) the word signifies *strong* or *proud.* (See the note on xxx. 7.)

And wounded the dragon?] See the note on xxvii. 1.

Ver. 11. *Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return,* &c.] See the notes on xxxv. 10.

Ver. 12. *Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?*] See the note on l. 9.

Ver. 13. *And where is the fury of the oppressor?*] It shall so suddenly vanish, that if you look after it there shall no footsteps of it remain. (Compare Job xx. 7.)

Ver. 14. *The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed,* &c.] The Hebrew runs plainly thus: *The captive exile shall be quickly delivered, he shall not die in the pit* [or prison], *neither shall his bread fail.*

And that he should not die in the pit.] The *pit* is that part of the prison called the dungeon. (See Jer. xxxvii. 16. xxxviii. 6. Lam. iii. Zech. ix. 11.)

Ver. 15. *But I am the Lord thy God, that divideth the sea,* &c.] The connexion of this verse with what goes before will better appear, if we render it, *For I am the Lord thy God,* &c. God's dividing the Red Sea is here alluded to: compare Psal. lxxiv. 13. Job xxvi. 12. which place may not improbably be expounded with relation to the same miracle; for the whole verse runs thus, *He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud:* where the Hebrew word rendered *proud* is *Rahab,* the name of Egypt, as hath been observed upon ver. 10. of this chapter.

Ver. 16. *And I have put my words in thy mouth.*] I have made thee my oracle, I have entrusted thee with the office of declaring my gracious promises to the godly, and my threatenings to the wicked. This may be understood in a lower sense of Isaiah, but is chiefly meant of Christ. (Compare xlix. 2. l. 5, 6. lix. 21.)

And have covered thee in the shadow of my hand.] See xlix. 2.)

That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.] A political government in the prophetical idiom is often expressed by the several parts of the creation: according to which analogy, rulers and magistrates are denoted by the heavenly bodies, and inferior people by the earth: (see the note on xiii. 10.) if we take the words here in this metaphorical sense, they import, that God publishes these gracious promises by the ministry of Isaiah, in order to the restoring of the Jewish nation, and settling them in a political government again, subsisting by themselves and governed by their own laws. But the words do farther imply a promise of that new state of things, called afterward a *new heaven,* and a *new earth,* (lxv. 17. lxvi. 22.) wherein Christ will reward his saints and eminent servants, and where he himself will immediately preside over them. (Rev. xx. 4. see the note on xlv. 18.)

Ver. 17. *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury: thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.*] The prophet speaks of Jerusalem, as one lying astonished under the stroke of God's judgments, which are commonly represented under the notion of a cup of intoxicating liquors, because they amaze men, and bereave them of their judgment and discretion. *Drinking the dregs* of this cup is the same with taking it off to the bottom, where the strongest and most nauseous part of the portion was settled; and implies that God did not in the least spare her, but poured out the full measure of his wrath upon her. (Compare Psal. lxxv. 8. Jer. xxv. 15, 16. Ezek. xxiii. 32—34. Rev. xiv. 10.) Some suppose the metaphor to be taken from that intoxicating liquor which was wont to be given to condemned persons, to stupify them before their execution; such as was offered to Christ, (Matt. xxvii. 34.)

Ver. 18. *There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought up,* &c.] Although she is in this helpless distracted condition, and hath most need of support and comfort, yet there are none of her own children that are able to give it her: (see ver. 20.) and therefore it is from God alone that she must expect relief, (ver. 22.)

Ver. 19. *These two things are come upon thee—desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword.*] Abraham à Schultens, in his Observations upon Job, remarks, that the Hebrew word *shôd, desolation,* is properly used of famine. (See Job v. 22.) So that *desolation and famine, destruction and the sword,* are equivalent terms, and are the two evils here mentioned. To make the sense plainer, he thus translates the words, *These two things are come upon thee—desolation and destruction, even the famine and the sword:* the copulative particle being sometimes used by way of explanation: so 1 Sam. xxviii. 3. *They buried him in Ramah, even in his own city:* where it is in the Hebrew, *And in his own city.* (See likewise 1 Sam. xvii. 40.)

Who shall be sorry for thee?] Who is there left to take

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pity on thee, since thy children are all in as miserable a condition as thyself? (See the eighteenth and the following verse.)

By whom shall I comfort thee?] What human means of comfort is there left for thee? (Compare Amos vii. 2.)

Ver. 20. *Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, like a wild bull in a net,* &c.] A description of the miserable condition of the city when it was just taken by the enemy, and the choicest men for youth and courage lay weltering in their own blood in every street, struggling for life like a wild bull taken in a toil, and sinking under the weight of God's wrath. When God delivered up Zedekiah into the hands of his enemies, he is said to *spread his net upon him,* (Ezek. xii. 13. xvii. 20.)

Ver. 21. *And drunken, but not with wine.*] See ver. 17.

Ver. 22. *Thou shalt no more drink it again.*] Some render the words, *Thou shalt no longer drink thereof.* (Compare Ezek. xxxix. 28.) If we follow the common translation, and understand this of Jerusalem, it must mean that such a judgment should not come upon it again in several ages; a long continuance being often styled *for ever,* in the Hebrew. But by comparing this verse with ver. 16. and with liv. 9. we may conclude, that this prophecy hath a farther prospect upon a new state or restoration of the Jews, which is still to be expected. (See likewise xxxv. 8. 9. lii. 1. lx. 15. lxii. 8.)

[*Thou shalt no more drink it again.*] The words should rather be translated, *Thou shalt no longer drink thereof.* So the particle *nôd* plainly signifies, Ezek. xii. 28. Hos. i. 6. see Noldius, p. 682.]

Ver. 23. *But I will put it into the hands of them that afflict thee.*] Compare xlix. 26. Jer. xxv. 29. Rev. xviii. 6.

Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over.] The expression alludes to the custom of conquerors to tread upon the necks of the conquered. (See Josh. x. 24. Psal. lxvi. 12.) The phrase of *bowing down the soul,* signifies undergoing great oppression and misery. (See Psal. lvii. 6.)

CHAP. LII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet congratulates Jerusalem upon her restoration after the captivity, and tells her how every thing about her would put on a new face upon that joyful occasion. In which description he hath plainly an eye to the renovation of the church under the gospel. And in speaking upon this subject, he very naturally brings in a description of Christ in his state of humiliation and sufferings, together with the glory which would accrue to himself, and the advantages which all true believers would receive from thence. But, according to Mr. White's interpretation, this prophecy must come in very abruptly, without any connexion with what goes before, or what comes after.

Ver. 1. *AWAKE, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion.*] Thou hast for a long time been in a state of silence and obscurity, like one dead and buried; rouse up thyself, and resume thy former prowess and dignity. (Compare li. 17.)

Put on thy beautiful garments.] Jerusalem is described as lying in the dust, in a *disconsolate* condition, ver. 2. but here the prophet exhorts her to change her sackcloth or mournful dress for a festival one. (Compare lxi. 3.)

The holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.] No aliens or infidels, such as the Babylonians, shall invade thee. (Compare Nahum i. 15.) This mystically implies the church's being purified from all corruptions, and the contagion of the wicked. (See the note on xxxv. 8.)

Ver. 2. *Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem.*] The city before lay in the dust, and was buried in its own ruins. (Compare iii. 26. xlvii. 1.) But now she is exhorted to rise from the ground, where she had lain prostrate, (li. 23.) and sit upon her throne or seat of authority, as the mother-city of the Jewish nation.

Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.] Captivity and slavery are often expressed by the yoke of bondage. (See Deut. xxviii. 48. Jer. xxviii. 14.)

Ver. 3. *You have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.*] *For your iniquities you sold yourselves,* (l. 1.) So foolish a bargain you made, as to venture the parting with your liberty, only to enjoy your sins and idolatrous customs: you received no valuable consideration when you thus enslaved yourselves; and therefore, to make the sale and the redemption correspondent to each other, you shall be rescued out of this oppression gratis, which I will do by Cyrus. (See xlv. 13.) The words, in the mystical sense, may fitly be applied to the miserable captivity to which sinners enslave themselves, and the freedom of that redemption which Christ hath wrought for them. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 18. Rom. iii. 24.)

Ver. 4. *My people went down aforetime into Egypt; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.*] Compare Jer. l. 17. By the Assyrian, is meant the succession of Assyrian kings, Tiglath-pileser, Sennacherib, and the rest, down to Nebuchadnezzar; for the kings of Babylon are sometimes styled kings of Assyria. (See note on xiv. 25.) The Jews had given these princes no just cause for their ill usage of them; though God for just reasons made them his instruments in punishing a wicked people. Egypt and Assyria are often joined together as the two great oppressors of God's people. (See the note on xi. 16.)

Ver. 5. *Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord.*] Or, *what have I to do here?* (see note on xxii. 16.) that is, what have I to do with the Babylonians? when I gave my people into their hands, as the instruments of my vengeance, (see Jer. xxvii. 5, 6.) I never made over to them the right that I have in my people.

That my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl: and my name is continually blasphemed.] They had no valuable consideration given them for their liberty, (ver. 3.) nor did they injure the Babylonians first, that they should requite them in this manner, ver. 4. (to this sense the word *hinman* is often rendered *without cause:* see Psal. xxxv. 7. 19. lxix. 4. cix. 3. cxix. 161. Lament. iv. 52.) they met with ill usage, and I got no honour by it. On the contrary, *My name is continually blasphemed:* that is, the infidels take occasion from my delivering up my people into their hands, to reproach me as

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if I were either forgetful of them, or unable to help them. (See the note upon xlviii. 11.)

Ver. 6. *Therefore my people shall know my name,* &c.] They shall know my power, that it is I have made this promise of restoring them, who am always ready at hand to make good what I say: so some render the latter part of the verse, *That I am he that doth speak, and I am ready at hand* [to perform it].

Ver. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,* &c.] A poetical description of the messenger who first brought the good news of Cyrus's decree for the people's return home; whom the *watchmen,* mentioned ver. 8. are supposed to descry afar off from the tops of the mountains, making all possible haste to publish this happy news; a signal instance of God's overruling providence, and of the peculiar care he hath for his church. This text is very fitly applied by St. Paul to the first preachers of the gospel, Rom. x. 15. the very word importing *good tidings* of peace and salvation, whereby the kingdom of God was erected among men. Accordingly we may observe, that those Psalms wherein we find that expression, *The Lord reigneth,* are by the generality of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, expounded of the times of the Messias. (See Psal. xciii. xcvi. xcvii.)

Ver. 8. *Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice,* &c.] By *watchmen* are meant preachers or prophets. (See lvi. 10. Ezek. xxxiii. 7.) The words may be understood particularly of Haggai and Zechariah, with respect to the return from the captivity; and may be applied to the first preachers of the gospel in aftertimes.

They shall see eye to eye.] That is, clearly and evidently; the phrase means the same as *face to face.*

Ver. 9. *Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem.*] See xlix. 8. li. 3.

Ver. 10. *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm.*] He hath given evident tokens of his power and holiness.

All the ends of the world shall see the salvation of our God.] The plain import of the words, and the parallel text, Psal. xcviii. 3. shew, that this must be understood of the revelation of the gospel.

Ver. 11. *Depart, depart ye, go ye out from thence.*] See the note on xlviii. 20.

Touch no unclean thing.] The expression is taken from the legal pollutions contracted by touching any thing that was unclean; (see Lev. xxii. 4—6.) and is a command to God's people, and the priests especially, to cleanse themselves from all those defilements they may have contracted by living among the wicked.

Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord.] The priests under the law had the charge of the holy vessels, and all the furniture of the temple, committed to them: (see Numb. iii. 8.) and they were particularly enjoined to keep themselves free from all manner of pollutions. (See Lev. xxi. xxii.) The mystical sense of which command extends to all Christians, (see 2 Cor. vi. 17.) who are called a *holy priesthood,* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Ver. 12. *For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.*] Your fathers *were thrust out of Egypt in haste,* (Exod. xii. 33.) but ye shall have sufficient notice of your departure out of Babylon, that ye may purify and prepare yourselves for it: and God himself shall be both in the head and rear of you, and, like the pillar of cloud in the wilderness, shall be both your guide and defence. (See Exod. xiv. 19, 20.)

Ver. 13. *Behold, my servant shall deal prudently.*] Or, *shall prosper,* as the margin reads, more agreeably to what follows. Here begins a new section, [the Chaldee paraphrase understands the person spoken of here, and to the end of the following chapter, to be the Messias,] which contains so clear a prophecy of the *sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow,* that all Christian interpreters forsake Grotius here, even those that too servilely copy after him in other places, and think that this prophecy can be applied to none but Christ, who is here called God's *servant* in an eminent sense. (See the note on xlii. 1.)

He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.] He shall be exalted to be the head of a numerous offspring, to *justify many,* and *to divide the spoil with the strong,* (liii. 10—12.) The glories of the Messias are elsewhere in the prophets set forth in the most magnificent terms. And the Jews have a remarkable saying recorded in some of their oldest writers, *That the Messias should be exalted above Abraham, be extolled above Moses, and be higher than the angels:* a sentence that seems to have been derived to them from a more ancient tradition; for we find St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, proves the supereminent dignity of Christ, by the same topics, by shewing him to be greater than Abraham: (Heb. vii. 6, 7.) worthy of more honour than Moses, (iii. 3. 5, 6.) and higher than the angels, (i. 4, &c.)

Ver. 14. *As many were astonished at thee.*] The prophet speaks of that surprise and astonishment men were seized with, by the unexpected change they observed in Christ's outward appearance, at the time of his sufferings, and the strange alteration between him that was so lately followed by multitudes, with acclamations and *hosannahs,* and reverenced as *the great Prophet that should come into the world,* and the same person suffering on the cross, and treated as *the scorn of men, and the outcast of the people.* (See Matt. xxvii. 39. 42.)

His visage was so marred more than any man, &c.] See liii. 2.

Ver. 15. *So shall ye sprinkle many nations.*] His sufferings, however they may render him despicable for the present, yet shall bring great benefit to others, and in the end redound to his own glory: he shall purify whole nations by his blood, and present them holy to God. The expression alludes to the legal aspersions, by which the people were sanctified. (Compare Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Heb. ix. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2.)

The kings shall shut their mouths at him.] The greatest kings and princes shall submit themselves to him, laying their hands upon their mouths, and hearkening to his instructions with the profoundest reverence and attention. (Compare Job xxix. 9, 10. xl. 4. and see above, xlix. 13.)

For that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.] Those nations and their kings shall be instructed in such heavenly truths, as human reason could never be able to discover. The gospel is called a *mystery kept secret from ages and generations,* the knowledge of which could not be attained but by Divine revelation. (See Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 5. 9.)

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CHAP. LIII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter describes the circumstances of our Saviour's sufferings so exactly, that it seems rather a history of his passion, than a prophecy: and it is so undeniable a proof of the truth of Christianity, that the bare reading it, and comparing it with the gospel-history, hath converted some infidels.

Ver. 1. *WHO hath believed our report?* &c.] This is spoken in the person of Christ and his apostles: Who, say they, among our own countrymen, hath believed our preaching or doctrine? So the word *shemuah* signifies, xxviii. 9. And although God hath shewed such visible tokens of his power, (compare lii. 10.) in those miracles by which he hath given testimony to our mission, yet how few of our own nation are convinced by them? (Compare John xii. 37, 38. Rom. x. 16.)

Ver. 2. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.*] The prophet assigns the cause of the Jews rejecting Christ, *viz.* the meanness of his outward appearance. The Messias is elsewhere described under the resemblance of a *branch* or *scion* growing out of the stem or stock of David. (See xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5.) But here he is resembled to a little *sucker;* the literal interpretation of the word *ijonek,* and to a branch growing out of a *dry ground,* which looks withered, and does not promise either life or fruit. The word *shoresh, root,* should rather be translated *branch,* or shoot. (See the note on xi. 10.)

He shall grow up before him.] That is, before the Lord, mentioned ver. 1. under his immediate care and inspection; so the expression of *dwelling before God,* signifies abiding under his protection, Psal. lxi. 7. Or *before him* may signify here, according to God's determinate counsel and purpose, as the phrase denotes, Rom. iv. 17.

He hath no form nor comeliness, &c.] The meanness of his outward circumstances, especially when he came to be condemned as a malefactor, made his person appear despicable. (Compare lii. 14.) From this text Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and others of the ancient fathers, concluded our Saviour's person to have been deformed; an opinion in my judgment not at all probable. In the fourth and following centuries, a quite contrary notion was advanced by St. Jerome, and others, *viz.* that Christ was a person of extraordinary comeliness, which they grounded chiefly upon that place of the forty-fifth Psalm, (ver. 3.) *Thou art fairer than the children of men,* &c. From these two contrary opinions we may conclude, that the making or setting up the *image* or the *picture of Christ,* was no part of religious worship in the early ages of Christianity, or else there would have remained some more certain tradition concerning his outward shape and person.

[*That we should desire him.*] He that is described as the *Desire of all nations,* Hag. ii. 6. (where the word is the same as in the Hebrew here) did not appear at all desirable to those of his own nation.]

Ver. 3. *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*] *Enduring the continual contradiction of sinners,* and all the ill treatment that the malice of men or devils could suggest. (See Luke xxii. 53.)

And we hid as it were our faces from him.] Out of aversion or contempt. (Compare i. 15. liv. 8. lix. 2.) So to *turn away our face from the needy,* (Ecclus. iv. 5.) is to disregard him, and take no pity on his sufferings.

Ver. 4. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.*] He hath borne the evils and punishments which were due to our sins. The two Hebrew verbs, *nasa* and *sabal,* properly signify to bear the punishment due to sin. The former is taken so in that noted expression, when any person is said to *bear his iniquity; i. e.* the punishment of his iniquity: the latter signifies properly to have iniquity laid upon one as a burden, which is the same with undergoing the punishment due to it. So this word is used, Lam. v. 7. *Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities;* that is, we have been punished in their stead. It is used again in the same sense, at ver. 11. of this chapter.

Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.] His enemies looked upon him as forsaken of God, and derided him for his vain boasts that God was his Father. (See Matt. xxvii. 43.)

Ver. 5. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him.*] He suffered those chastisements or punishments by which our peace with God was wrought, and satisfaction was made to the Divine justice. (See Rom. v. 1. Ephes. ii. 14.)

Ver. 6. *All we like sheep are gone astray.*] A proverbial expression. (See Psal. cxix. 176. Zech. x. 2. Matt. xviii. 11, 12. Luke xv. 4.)

And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.] The letter of the Hebrew runs thus: *The Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on him,* or *to fall upon him,* as the verb *pagang* signifies, Judg. viii. 21. xv. 12. Amos v. 19.

Ver. 7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.*] The words may better be rendered, *It was exacted* of him, *and he answered* the demand: that is, he gave that satisfaction which God's justice demanded for our sins.

Yet he opened not his mouth.] All the hard usage he met with did not prevail with him to utter any intemperate expression, or to make any return to the ill language which was given him. (See 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23.) Nay, he even abstained from making his just defence, any farther than it was necessary for him to plead his innocence. (See Matt. xxvi. 63. xxvii. 12.)

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.] Meekly submitting to the violence of his persecutors, and not offering to make the least resistance. (See Matt. xxvi. 52, 53.) *To go as an ox, or lamb, to the slaughter,* is another proverbial expression, which we meet with Prov. vii. 22. Jer. xi. 19. but of a different signification, denoting a false security, or insensibility of danger; to which sense it is explained by Jeremiah himself, in that place, *I know not*; saith he, *that they had devised devices against me.* And therefore that text is very impertinently alleged by Grotius here, to justify his applying this part of the prophecy to Jeremiah's case.

Ver. 8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment.*] We do not read that imprisonment was any part of Christ's sufferings: so I think the marginal reading is to be preferred, *He was taken away by distress and judgment:* or it may be rendered, *He was carried away to execution* (so the participle of *lukkak* is used, Prov. xxiv. 11.) *by tyrannical oppression, and a sentence of condemnation.* The word *notzer,*

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which our translation renders *prison*, is rendered *oppression*, Psal. cvii. 39.

And who shall declare his generation?] Who can declare the wickedness of the men of that age or generation, who cut off this innocent person in so unjust a manner? The Hebrew word *dôr*, often signifies the men of such an age or place. (See Gen. vii. 1. Deut. xxxii. 5. 20. Psal. lxxviii. 8.) In the same sense is γενεὰ frequently used in the New Testament, particularly Matt. xii. 45. xxiii. 36. Some commentators understand this text of Christ's *eternal generation*, but then I conceive the word in the Hebrew should have been *toledoth*.

Ver. 9. *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence*, &c.] Some render the words thus, *His grave was appointed with the wicked* (being crucified with malefactors), *but he was with the rich in his death*, being buried in the monument of Joseph of Arimathea; or, *his sepulchre was with the rich:* so Schindler renders the word *bemothau*, as if it were derived from *bamah*. Others to this purpose, *God delivered him, even to the grave and to death, into the hands of the wicked and powerful.* The word *rich* is sometimes taken, in an ill sense, for a tyrant or oppressor: (see Job xxvii. 19. compared with ver. 13.) and so they understand it here, and translate the latter part of the verse thus, *Not for any violence that he had done, or that any deceit was found in his mouth.* The very same Hebrew particles, *nal lo*, being thus translated, Job xvi. 17. Or else, taking those particles in that sense, we may very well join this sentence to the following verse, thus, *Although he had done no wickedness, neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.*

Ver. 10. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.*] Our Saviour's words, John xii. 24. are a commentary upon this place, where, speaking of the benefits that would follow from his death, he saith, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

[*He shall see his seed.*] This may be properly understood of our Lord's disciples, called Christians, after his name. Nothing is more usual than to call teachers by the name of *fathers*, (see 2 Kings ii. 12. xiii. 14.) and them that follow his instructions by the name of *children*. In this sense we read of the *children of Abraham*, the *children of God*, and the *children of wisdom*. The Chaldee, LXX. and Vulgar Latin, join the following words to this sentence, *He shall see a seed which shall prolong their days; i. e.* the church, which shall continue unto the end of the world.]

He shall prolong his days.] *Being raised up from the dead, he shall die no more*, (Rom. vi. 9.)

And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.] The redemption and salvation of mankind is often called God's *good pleasure;* as being both highly acceptable to him, and likewise proceeding purely from his good pleasure and free grace. (See Ephes. i. 5. 9. 2 Thess. i. 11. John vi. 39.)

Ver. 11. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*] He shall rejoice to find that his death and sufferings have not been in vain, but the means of saving so many: to this sense some understand that text of St. Paul, where he saith, that Christ, *for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame*, (Heb. xii. 2.)

By his knowledge.] By such a knowledge of Christ, as produceth faith and obedience. (See John xvii. 3. Philip. iii. 8, 9. 2 Pet. i. 3.)

Shall my righteous servant.] St. John alludes to this place, when he calls our Saviour, *Jesus Christ the righteous*, 1 John ii. 1. (Concerning the title of *servant*, see the note on xlii. 1.)

Justify many.] The writers of the New Testament allude to this text, when they say, that *Christ gave his life a ransom for many;* (Matt. xx. 28.) *His blood was shed for many;* (Matt. xxvi. 28.) *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;* (Heb. ix. 28.) and, *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, (Rom. v. 19.) where the οἱ Πολλοὶ, *the many*, are equivalent to *all men*, as appears by the foregoing verse.

Ver. 12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great.*] The words may be rendered more exactly to the Hebrew, thus, *I will bestow many upon him;* or, *I will give him his share or possession in many:* to this sense the Septuagint render it, Κληρονομήσει πολλούς. Thus the expression is equivalent to that of Psal. ii. 1. *I will give him the heathen to his inheritance*, &c. Any gift is expressed in the Hebrew by a share or lot in a division: the phrase alludes to the division of the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes by lot. (See Psal. xvi. 5, 6.)

And he shall divide the spoil with the strong.] The expression alludes to the custom of conquerors to divide the spoils of their victory with their officers and soldiers. (See ix. 3. Josh. xxii. 8. Judg. v. 30. Prov. xvi. 19. Zech. xiv. 1.) So Christ, after he had conquered the powers of darkness by his cross, (see Colos. ii. 15.) should ascend triumphantly into heaven, *leading captivity captive, and distributing gifts unto men*, (Ephes. iv. 8.) But I must observe, that the Septuagint and Chaldee paraphrase render the words, *He shall divide the spoils of the strong;* as if the Hebrew particle *eth* stood for *meeth*, as it does Gen. iv. 1. and elsewhere; and then the sense will be, that Christ shall turn Satan out of that kingdom, which he had usurped over mankind, and assert his own right to it. (See John xii. 31.) And this interpretation of the words, our Saviour himself may be thought to allude to, when, speaking of his conquest over Satan, he saith, *When a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.* (Luke xi. 22.)

Because he hath poured out his soul unto death.] He hath poured forth his blood, wherein the life or animal soul doth consist. (See Lev. xvii. 11.) The same reason of Christ's exaltation is assigned, Philip. ii. 9.

CHAP. LIV.

ARGUMENT.

In the foregoing chapter the prophet described the sufferings of Christ, and here he prophesies of the increase and glory of the church which should follow upon it; which, indeed, were to commence from the time of Christ's passion, but would not be completed till his second coming, and after the Jews were again restored to God's favour.

Ver. 1. *SING, O barren, thou that didst not bear.*] Or, *Thou that hast not borne* children a great while: the prophet

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had described Jerusalem, during the captivity, as a desolate woman, forsaken of her husband, and bereaved of her children: (xlix. 21. compare lxii. 4.) here he bids her rejoice and comfort herself after her affliction, because her children should be much more numerous than they were in her most flourishing condition. This cannot be literally true of the Jewish nation, who never made such a figure after the captivity, as they did in the days of David and Solomon; and consequently can be only imperfectly understood of Jerusalem, as she was a type of the Christian church, according to St. Paul's exposition of the text, Gal. iv. 27. Expounding the words to this sense, they import, That the church, after her spouse, Jesus Christ, was taken from her by death, and she left in a disconsolate, forlorn condition, and her children orphans; (see John xiv. 18.) desponding and comfortless, (Luke xxiv. 21.) from such mean and contemptible beginnings, should spread herself over the world, and will still receive a farther enlargement, when the fulness of the Jews and gentiles is come in.

For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.] She that was desolate without inhabitant, shall have more children than ever she had formerly whilst she was married; *i. e.* while God owned his covenant relation to her; and the land, *of which she was metropolis*, was full of people. (See ver. 5. and lxii. 4.)

Ver. 2. *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations.*] The prophet describes the city of Jerusalem, the figure of the Christian church, (God's tabernacle, Rev. xxi. 3.) under the metaphor of a tent, or tabernacle, the most ancient way of dwelling; and bids her enlarge her borders in proportion to the increase of her inhabitants. (Compare xlix. 19, 20. xxxiii. 20.)

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.*] Thy people shall become so numerous, that thou shalt be forced to seek out new habitations for them.

And thy seed shall inherit the gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.] This may be understood, in a low sense, of the Jews enlarging their borders, by the conquests of Judas Maccabæus, over their neighbouring countries, (see 1 Maccab. v.) and their inhabiting those cities in Judea which had been left desolate, it may be, ever since the captivity of the ten tribes; but the words do plainly imply the enlargement of the church, by admitting the gentiles within her territories, and that the minds of rude and barbarous nations should be cultivated with the knowledge of the true God. (See the note on xlix. 8.)

Ver. 4. *For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.*] The favour and affection God will shew towards thee now, will make thee forget all thy former disgraces and afflictions, both those thou sufferedst in Egypt, and afterward in the times of the judges, and those which thou enduredst in the time of thy captivity, when God rejected thee, and left thee in a state of *widowhood*. (See ver. 6. l. 1.) This verse, and ver. 6. may have a particular regard to God's calling of the Jews, and restoring them to favour, after they had been rejected a great while. (See the note upon ver. 13. and compare lx. 15. lxi. 7. lxii. 4.)

Ver. 5. *For thy Maker is thy husband.*] Though God had cast thee off for some time, (ver. 1.) yet he still owns the relation of a *husband* towards thee, and will shew true marks of his conjugal affection to thee. (See the note on xlviii. 8.)

The God of the whole earth shall he be called.] And now the time is coming, when he shall not be called the God of the Jews only, but also of the gentiles, whom he shall admit into the same covenant relation to himself, with the Jews. (Compare Zech. xiv. 9. Rom. iii. 29.)

Ver. 6. *For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused.*] God is now reconciled to thee again, after having cast thee off, and left thee in a desolate and mournful condition. (See ver. 1. 4.) He will now cherish thee, as if he were newly married to thee. (See lxii. 4.) *A wife of youth*, signifies a wife that a man was married to in his youth, who was his first love, and therefore not easily to be parted with. (See Prov. v. 18. Mal. ii. 14.)

Ver. 7. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee.*] God's anger towards his servants is short, when compared with that everlasting kindness he will shew towards them. (See Psal. xxx. 5.) The same rule holds true of the church in general, whose *light afflictions are but for a moment*, in comparison of that eternal glory he hath promised them; an earnest of which will be that millenium of rest, which is to usher in the heavenly state, and seems to be described in the following part of the chapter.

But with great mercies will I gather thee.] This was to be understood, either of the gathering together of the Jews from their several dispersions; (compare xi. 12. xxvii. 12. xliii. 6.) or of the uniting the Jews and gentiles in one body, under Christ their head, which will be the effect or consequent of the former. (See lvi. 8. lx. 4. lxvi. 18. Gen. xlix. 10. Ephes. i. 10.) Or, lastly, it may be expounded of the gathering together of the saints at the last day, when there shall be an entire separation made between them and the wicked. (See Matt. xiii. 41. 49. xxiv. 31. xxv. 32. 1 Thess. iv. 17. 2 Thess. ii. 1.) This place may most probably be understood in the first sense.

Ver. 9. *As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee.*] God's irrevocable promise is elsewhere called his oath, though the formality of swearing was not used. (See Psal. lxxxix. 3. cv. 11. cxxxii. 11.) This solemn promise which God here makes, must relate to such a time when God will not afflict his people any more: and as it would not have been true, if it were applied to the Jews returning from Babylon, for their whole nation and government was afterward utterly ruined by the Romans; so neither can it be made good, as long as the present state of the world continues.

Mr. White hath, with great sagacity, discovered the fulfilling of this prophecy, in the present dispersion of the Jews over the world; which most other writers speak of as a remarkable judgment of God upon that nation, that they should never incorporate with any other community, but continue as a separate people from the rest of the world, living every where, like strangers, only upon sufferance: and this sort of exile is threatened, as a punishment to be inflicted upon them for their heinous sins, by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 64—66. and by Hosea, iii. 4.

Ver. 10. *For the mountains shall depart*, &c.] Compare li. 6.

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Ver. 11. *Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours.*] We read of *stones of divers colours*, 1 Chron. xxix. 2. where the word in the original is the same as it is here, and probably means a stone of a red or shining colour. This and the next verse may, in a qualified sense, be applied to the rebuilding the city and temple after the captivity; but must have some farther meaning in it, if we compare it with that old prophecy mentioned in Tobit, xiii. 16, 17. which Mr. Mede hath shewed must relate to the latter times (see his Dissertat. upon the last chapter of Tobit), and with Rev. xxi. 18, &c. The church of Christ, and the society of antichrist, are described as two cities; the latter called *mystical Babylon*, Rev. xvii. 5. the former, the *new and heavenly Jerusalem*, Rev. xxi. 2. 10. to distinguish it from the earthly city of that name, and is there described as *coming down from God*, and adorned with all those gifts and graces which can render it glorious and durable, which are metaphorically represented under the figure of a four-square solid and beautiful structure, consisting all of gold and precious stones.

Ver. 12. *And all thy borders of pleasant stones.*] The Hebrew word here, which is commonly rendered a *border*, the Septuagint translate a *wall*, which makes the words exactly parallel with Rev. xxi. 18.

Ver. 13. *And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.*] This signifies that plentiful effusion of grace which the prophets mention as the peculiar character of the gospel-times. (See the note on xliv. 3.) The effects of it were very signal in the first times of the gospel. (See John vi. 45. compared with Jer. xxxi. 34. see likewise Acts iv. 33. 1 Cor. i. 4, 5.) And there shall be another remarkable effusion of it, when God shall *pour the spirit of grace and supplication* upon the Jews, in order to their conversion, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, xii. 10. confirmed by the assertion of St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 16. who expressly tells us, that the time will come when the heart of that people *shall turn to the Lord, and then the veil shall be taken away* from it: and then they shall be the instruments of bringing in the remainder of the unconverted gentiles. (See lxvi. 19, 20.) And therefore we are not to make the sense of the present Jews any objection against interpreting some of the ancient prophecies with relation to their conversion, as Mr. White seems to do (see his argument upon the fortieth chapter of this prophecy), the generality of them being a profligate race of people, abandoned of God and goodness: but even such wretches God is able to convert whenever he pleases, and, as John Baptist told their forefathers, can out of *these stones raise up children unto Abraham*, (Matt. iii. 9.)

Ver. 14. *In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression*; &c.] God's mercy and thy own integrity shall be thy defence and protection, so that thou needest not fear either any threatening or invasion from foreign enemies. (See lii. 1. lx. 18.)

Ver. 15. *Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me.*] I foresee your enemies will make attempts against you; but as they do it without my direction, so neither shall they be blessed with my assistance.

Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.] Or, *shall fall to thee*, as the Hebrew literally imports: that is, shall come over to thy side; in which sense the phrase is used, Jer. xxxvii. 14. So the meaning of the sentence will be this, Whosoever comes against thee, instead of continuing thy enemy, will become thy convert, as St. Paul was at the beginning of Christianity.

Ver. 16. *Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals*, &c.] I have created the maker of offensive weapons, and them that use them; and both being under my government and direction, no design formed against thee shall be prospered by me.

Ver. 17. *Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, shalt thou condemn.*] God will protect and maintain thy innocence against all the malicious suggestions of thine enemies, either men or devils. (Compare l. 8, 9. Rev. xii. 10.)

And their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.] I will acquit them, and pronounce them innocent or justified: this shall be the portion and privilege of my faithful servants. (See xlv. 24, 25.) Or *righteousness* may be equivalent to salvation. (See lxii. 1, 2.)

CHAP. LV.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet publishes the free offers of grace by the gospel, and exhorts men not to reject them, but to turn to God by a sincere repentance, who will graciously pardon and accept them.

Ver. 1. *HO, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.*] The Divine grace is often represented under the emblem of springs and streams of water. (See the notes upon xxx. 25. xliv. 3.) In like manner Divine knowledge, the food and support of the soul, is expressed by the metaphors of meat and drink, which sustain the body. (See John vi. 27. and so to the end of the chapter.) Under this metaphor the prophet here exhorts men to make use of those means of instruction which the gospel so freely offers. Christ himself expounds the words to this sense, John vii. 37.

Come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.] *Buying* sometimes signifies in general gaining or procuring any thing. In this sense Solomon uses the word, when he bids us *buy the truth and sell it not; i. e.* spare no pains to learn it, (Prov. xxiii. 23. see likewise Rev. iii. 18.) It is added, *without money, and without price*, to shew that Divine knowledge is of far greater value than to be purchased with money, being the gift of God, and not to be obtained but by earnest prayer and sincere endeavours. (Compare Ecclus. li. 25, 26.)

Ver. 2. *Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?*] All the pretences to religious knowledge, but such as proceed from God himself, are vain and useless; they can neither instruct men in the truth, nor lead them to happiness.

And let your soul delight itself in fatness.] By *fatness* is meant all sorts of delicious food: (see xxv. 6.) and the expression here denotes the true knowledge of God and of happiness, as was observed upon the first verse. (Compare likewise the following verse.)

Ver. 3. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*] The gospel is often

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called an *everlasting covenant,* (see lxi. 8. Jer. xxxii. 40. l. 5.) in opposition to the law, which was designed but for a time, and was to give way to a better. And by the terms of this covenant, God will fulfil those promises which he made to David, of establishing his throne for ever: (see 2 Sam. vii. 16. Psal. lxxxix. 28.) which will not be fully verified, but in the Messias, of whose *kingdom there shall be no end.* (See Acts xiii. 34.)

Ver. 4. *Behold, I have given him to be a witness to the people.*] David is in the prophets often put for Christ, in whom all the promises made to David are to be fulfilled. (See Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Hos. iii. 5.) And as all the prophets are God's witnesses, (see the note on xliii. 10.) so that title does in an eminent manner belong to the Messias, who was the *great Prophet that should come into the world:* accordingly he is styled *the faithful witness,* (Rev. i. 5.) and *for this cause came he into the world, that he should bear witness to the truth,* as he speaks himself, (John xviii. 37.)

A leader and commander of the people.] The word *nagid,* which is translated *leader,* signifies likewise a *prince,* or *ruler;* and so it is translated, Dan. ix. 26. where the same title is given to the Messias.

Ver. 5. *Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not.*] Christ is elsewhere styled the *light of the gentiles.* (See xlii. 6, xlix. 6.)

For he hath glorified thee.] See the note on lii. 13.

Ver. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,* &c.] A general exhortation to men, to make use of the means and opportunities of grace which the gospel offers. To the same purpose are those exhortations we read in the New Testament, *not to receive the grace of God in vain,* (2 Cor. vi. 2.) and to *hearken to God's voice while it is called to-day,* (Heb. iii. 13.) Which places intimate, that men may outlive their day of grace, and either themselves be *hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;* or else God may *remove their candlestick,* and take away those means of instruction from them, which they made no better use of. (See Matt. xxi. 43.)

Ver. 7. *And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.*] A general promulgation of pardon, such as properly belongs to the gospel-state. (Compare Matt. xi. 28. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

Ver. 8, 9. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,* &c.] My purposes in revealing the gospel carry in them such marks of goodness and condescension in forgiving sins, (see ver. 7.) and of truth and faithfulness in fulfilling my promises, (see ver. 10, 11.) that they as far exceed the measures of human proceedings, as heaven is high above the earth.

Ver. 10, 11. *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven,* &c.] You find by experience that the rain and snow fulfil my pleasure, and answer the ends for which I send them down upon the earth: and you may be assured that my word and promise shall be much more effectual, and fulfil all my gracious purposes and designs, of *bringing men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.*

Ver. 12. *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.*] This may be particularly meant of the Jews' return from captivity, as the second verse in the next chapter is to be applied to them: but then we are to consider their call out of Babylon to be an emblem of a greater deliverance; when God will call men by the gospel *out of darkness into his marvellous light:* upon which account the Christians are called a *chosen generation,* and *a peculiar people,* whom God hath separated to himself from the rest of the world. (See 1 Pet. ii. 9. Gal. i. 4.) Compare the phrase, *go out,* with xlii. 7. xlix. 9. The words may be understood of the final restoration of the Jews, which shall be accompanied with bringing in the fulness of the gentiles. (Compare xxxv. 10.)

The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, &c.] See note on xlii. 10.

Ver. 13. *Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree.*] Spiritual blessings are often represented under the emblems of fruitfulness and plenty. (Compare xxxv. 2.) So here we may take the words as importing that virtue and holiness shall spring up instead of vice and wickedness; good men being elsewhere compared to fruitful trees: (see Psal. i. 3. Luke vi. 44, 45.) as the wicked are resembled to briers and thorns. (See the note on ix. 18.) Or else the words may import a renovation of the world, and restoring it to a paradisiacal state, as some understand the promise of a *new heaven and new earth,* mentioned lxv. 17.

And it shall be unto the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, &c.] It shall turn to God's praise, and be an everlasting monument or memorial of his goodness. Thus the expression, *for a name,* is used Jer. xiii. 11. where, *for a name, for a praise,* and *for a glory,* are used as equivalent terms. So Ezek. xxiii. 10. where our translation reads, *She became famous among women,* it is in the original, *She became a name among women.*

CHAP. LVI.

ARGUMENT.

The exhortations in this chapter, to the ninth verse, are particularly directed to the Jews under captivity, and to the proselytes who were joined to them; many strangers, by conversing with the Jews, who were dispersed in foreign countries, being persuaded to embrace their religion. The prophet encourages the latter to hope that God will accept them, though they cannot lay claim to all the privileges the natural Jews valued themselves so much upon. God tells them, (ver. 8.) that he will, in due time, add many other gentiles to his church, and make them one body with the Jews: which prediction plainly relates to the times of the gospel.

Ver. 1. *KEEP ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come,* &c.] Compare xlvi. 13. An exhortation resembling that of John Baptist, (Matt. iii. 2.) whereby men are required to prepare their minds, and render themselves fit objects of God's mercy.

Ver. 2. *That keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.*] The sabbath was ordained as a sign or token of God's covenant with his people; (see Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.) whereupon the observation of it was the distinguishing character of a Jew, by which he declared himself a worshipper of the true God, who created heaven and earth, and instituted the sabbath as a memorial of that creation. The *keeping the sabbath* is a precept here more particularly mentioned, be-

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cause it might be observed under the captivity, when many other ceremonial laws, particularly those concerning sacrifice, could not.

Ver. 3. *Neither let the son of the stranger, who hath joined himself unto the Lord, speak, saying,* &c.] The strangers were those who joined themselves with the Jews in worshipping the true God, without being circumcised, or obliging themselves to observe the whole law of Moses. They are called *devout Greeks,* or *religious proselytes,* and the *worshippers of God,* in the Acts. (See xiii. 47. xvii. 4. xviii. 7.) God here declares his accepting of such, thereby preparing a way for the gospel institution, when the *partition-wall* between the Jews and gentiles should be broken down.

Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.] Fruitfulness was one of the principal blessings promised under the law. (See Gen. xlix. 25. Deut. xxviii. 4.) In like manner, barrenness was both a curse and a reproach. (See note on iv. 1.)

Ver. 5. *Even to them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than that of sons and of daughters,* &c.] Eunuchs were forbid *to enter into the congregation of the Lord,* or join themselves with the Jews in their public assemblies, (Deut. xxiii. 1.) Here God tells them the time is coming, when these restraints shall be taken off; the inward endowments of the soul shall be sufficient to give pious persons a title to the communion of saints, and their names shall be written in *the book of life,* a more lasting remembrance than posterity can entitle them to. (See Colos. iii. 11.)

Ver. 6. *Also the sons of the stranger,* [compare lx. 10.]—*every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.*] The words of the fourth commandment do plainly include all *strangers that lived within the gates of the Jews,* expressed elsewhere by the *stranger that sojourneth with thee,* (Exod. xii. 48. see likewise Lev. xxv. 47.) So the Septuagint understood the words of the fourth commandment, and render them, ὁ προσήλυτος ὁ παροικῶν ἐν σοι: *the proselyte that sojourns with thee.* And yet the later rabbins maintain, that the precept of the sabbath only obliges such proselytes as are circumcised. (See Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gentium, lib. iii. cap. 12.)

And taketh hold of my covenant.] The sabbath was ordained as a sign or token of God's covenant with his people. (See the note upon ver. 2.) So that keeping the sabbath was one sort of initiation into that covenant.

Ver. 7. *Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,* &c.] This may be understood of those gentile worshippers, who paid their devotions in the *court of the gentiles,* a place within the precincts of the temple, set apart for that purpose. Many of these came from distant countries to Jerusalem, at the solemn festivals. (See John xii. 20. Acts viii. 27.) But we are likewise to understand the words, of the gentiles coming into the Christian church, and joining in the worship of it.

Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.] We may understand the words partly of those sacrifices which the gentile converts did offer under the second temple: but the calling of the temple the *house of prayer,* doth make it probable that the sacrifices here mentioned are chiefly to be understood of those *spiritual sacrifices* of prayer and thanksgiving, which are proper to the Christian worship. (See Heb. xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5.) What Calvin saith upon the place, "Loquitur propheta figuris, quæ suæ conveniunt ætati," *The prophet uses such expressions,* with relation to the gospel-times, *as are taken from the usages of his own time,* is a good rule for explaining the idioms of the prophetical writings, where the state of the Christian church is often described by representations taken from the Jewish temple and government. (See the notes on xix. 19. lxvi. 23.)

Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.] It was designed for other nations, as well as the Jews, to say their prayers in, at its first dedication by Solomon. (See 1 Kings viii. 41, 42.) Although the number of proselytes was not considerable till the times of the second temple.

Ver. 8. *The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him,* &c.] The gathering the dispersed Jews into one body and people again, is but an earnest of what I will do, when *at the fulness of time I shall gather together in one all things by Christ,* Ephes. i. 10. (See the note on liv. 7.)

Ver. 9. *All ye beasts of the field, come to devour; yea, all ye beasts of the forest.*] A new chapter should have been begun here; for this is a new prophecy, setting forth, in the remainder of this and in the following chapter, the sins and miseries which ushered in and ended in the captivity: when, first, Pharaoh-Nechoh made the land tributary; (2 Kings xxiii. 33.) then bands of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Ammonites, and Moabites, invaded it; (ibid. xxiv. 2.) and at last Nebuchadnezzar completed its destruction. (Compare the expressions here with Jer. xii. 9. Habak. ii. 17.)

Ver. 10. *His watchmen are blind: they are all dumb dogs,* &c.] The cause of these miseries is imputed here to the ignorance and carelessness of their governors, both in church and state (see the following verse), whom the prophet compares to *dumb dogs,* that give no warning of approaching thieves or enemies, but give themselves up to sleep and idleness.

Ver. 11. *Yea, they are greedy dogs.*] Or impudent, so the word *naz* elsewhere signifies. (See Prov. vii. 13. xxi. 29.) In like manner Homer describes impudence, by Κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων, *having the eyes,* or *look, of a dog.*

They are shepherds that cannot understand.] The word *shepherd* signifies civil governors, as well as ecclesiastical guides. (See xliv. 28. Jer. xxv. 34. xlix. 19. Zech. xi. 3. 5. 8, &c. xiii. 7.)

They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.] That is, every one from his quarter minds only his own advantage; they are all alike, from one end to the other: so the word *mikkatzeb* signifies *from every quarter,* Gen. xix. 4.

Ver. 12. *To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*] This they said to deride the threatenings of destruction which the prophets denounced against them.

CHAP. LVII.

ARGUMENT.

The same subject is continued which was begun in the last chapter; and in this the prophet reproves the idolatries which were so publicly practised in the latter times of the kings of Judah, and which provoked God

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to deliver up his people captives to the Babylonians, from whence nevertheless he promises to deliver them, at the latter end of the chapter.

Ver. 1. *THE righteous perisheth.*] This may be understood either of Hezekiah or of Josiah: Hezekiah had a promise made him that peace should continue during his days, (xxxix. 8.) Josiah had likewise a promise of dying in peace, and not seeing the evil which God would bring upon Jerusalem, (2 Kings xxii. 20.)

And no man layeth it to heart.] No man reflects with himself how sore a judgment it is to have good men, and especially pious princes, taken away in bad times, who might either by their prayers avert impending judgments, or, by their prudence and vigilance, apply proper remedies to the public calamities.

And merciful men are taken away.] The Hebrew word *asaph* signifies to be *gathered*, and is used of men's being laid in the sepulchres of their ancestors; which is elsewhere expressed, by being *gathered unto their people*. So Josiah is said to be *gathered to his grave*, (2 Kings xxii. 20.) In other places the word is joined with being buried. (See Jer. viii. 2. xxv. 33.) So we read, Job xxvii. 19. *The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered;* where the word were better translated *buried*.

Ver. 2. *They shall rest in their beds.*] As death is compared to sleep, so the grave is resembled to lying down in a bed. (See xiv. 18.) Particularly we read, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. of the *bed of spices* in which king Asa was laid: and if we understand the text before us, of the death of some of their good kings, the phrase may allude to the costly funerals with which they honoured the memory of their pious princes deceased.

Each one walking in his uprightness.] Or, *that hath walked in his uprightness*.

Ver. 3. *But draw hither, ye sons of the sorceress, ye seed of the adulterer,* &c.] The prophet summons those that practise the sorceries and idolatries of the heathen to come and hear their doom: these he calls the *sons of the sorceress*, and the *seed of the adulterer;* as our Saviour calls the wicked Jews, *an adulterous generation*, (Matt. xvi. 4.) Adultery being taken in a spiritual sense for departing from God, and breaking that faith and allegiance which is due to him, and especially for renouncing him, and worshipping idols. (See the note on xlviii. 8.) Men are called in Scripture the *children* of those whose practices they imitate. (See John viii. 39. 41. 44.)

Ver. 4. *Against whom do you make a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?*] Gestures of scorn and contempt, by which this idolatrous crew declared their hatred and despite to God's true servants.

Ver. 5. *Inflaming yourselves with idols.*] Idolatry, being spiritual adultery, is sometimes compared to the rage of lust. (See Ezek. xvi. xxiii.) It is true, too, that those shady groves dedicated to idol-worship, were a shelter for all manner of impurities. (See Hos. iv. 13, 14.)

Under every green tree.] See i. 29. Ezek. vi. 13.

Slaying the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks.] Offering them in sacrifice unto Moloch; a sin severely prohibited, (Lev. xx. 2, &c.) and yet much practised in the times of the idolatrous kings of Judah. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Ezek. xvi. 20.) And the *valley of Hinnom* was chiefly noted for this inhuman practice. (See Jer. vii. 31.)

Ver. 6. *Among the smooth stones of the stream* [or, of the valley] *is thy portion,* &c.] The words may be understood of the altars built there, or of stone pillars, erected for idolatrous worship, which they used to anoint with oil, or pour out their offerings upon them, such as the text here mentions: from whence came that proverbial speech concerning a superstitious man, Πάντα λίθον λιπαρὸν προσκυνῶν, *A worshipper of every shining stone;* mentioned by Clem. Alexandrinus, (Strom. lib. vii.) The same learned writer supposeth these to be the most ancient monuments of Divine worship, and older than the use of statues and images; for we find that Jacob, in compliance with the then received practice, as it is likely, *set up a pillar at Beth-el, and poured oil upon it*, Gen. xxviii. 18. (See Clem. Alexandr. Strom. lib. i. p. 348. D. and Protrept. p. 29. D.)

Even to them hast thou poured out a drink-offering, thou hast offered a meat-offering.] To the sacrifices of beasts were generally added an offering made of flour mixed with oil, which our translators render a *meat-offering*, (but might better be translated a *bread-offering*, see the note on xliii. 23.) and a certain quantity of wine for a drink-offering. (See Numb. xv. 4, 5. Joel i. 9.)

Ver. 7. *Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.*] Sacrificing upon the high places was an idolatrous practice often taken notice of, and consequently the *bed* here mentioned may most fitly be understood of such a bed as was used at feasts, and was prepared for the entertainment which was made with part of the oblation. (Compare Ezek. xxiii. 41. Amos ii. 8.) It was the custom of the Jews, as well as of the Romans, to lie upon beds or couches at their meals: (see 1 Sam. xxviii. 23. Amos vi. 4.) the same custom is mentioned Mark vii. 4. and in other places of the gospel, where the English reads, *he sat down* to meat, it is in the Greek, *he lay down*.

Ver. 8. *Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy memorial.*] Thou hast set up monuments of thy idolatry in every corner. The Hebrew verb *zakar*, with its derivatives, is used for any object, monument, or place of Divine worship, as Dr. Spencer hath observed, (de Legib. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 5.)

[*Behind the doors and the posts.*] They that did not care their idolatry should be discovered, set up their idols in secret places. See Deut. xxvii. 15.]

For thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up: thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them.] The prophet describes their idolatry under the metaphors of a harlot's being false to her husband's bed. (See ver. 3.) So he tells them, that they had committed spiritual adultery when they *went up* to the high places to sacrifice; (see ver. 7.) that they had multiplied their idolatries, as an unchaste woman does her lovers; that they had broken their covenant with God, whom they had acknowledged to be their Lord and husband, and made a new contract with idols to serve them. (See the note on xlviii. 8.) The word *bed* is of an ambiguous sense, and besides its proper signification, is taken for the furnishing out of a religious feast. (See the note upon ver. 7.)

Ver. 9. *And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes.*] The Jews are often upbraided

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for making leagues with idolatrous princes, and courting their favour by presents: (see xxx. 6. Hos. vii. 11. xii. 1.) sometimes they courted the king of Assyria, at other times the king of Egypt, as it best served their interest.

And didst send thy messengers afar off, and didst debase thyself even to hell.] Thou didst court the favour of these foreign princes by thy ambassadors, in the most abject and submissive terms.

Ver. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope.*] Thou hast tried all ways to save thyself from the evils that threaten thee: thou hast sought the friendship of foreign princes, and of their gods. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 21. 23.) And though thou hast found thyself disappointed in all these projects; yet still thou conceivest hopes of receiving benefit from their friendship and alliance.

Thou hast found the life of thy hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.] Thou hast made a shift by these methods to support thyself for the present, therefore thou dost not feel any remorse for thy evil practices.

Ver. 11. *And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me?*] The fear of God's displeasure ought, in all reason, to outweigh all other fears and apprehensions, (see li. 12, 13.) and deter thee from breaking that faith and covenant whereby thou art engaged to him. (See ver. 3. 8.) Departing from God is called, in other places, *dealing treacherously with him*, (Jer. iii. 20. v. 11.)

Have I not held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?] The Bishops' Bible, published under queen Elizabeth, translates the place thus: *Is it not because I held my peace, and that of a long time, therefore thou fearest me not?* Sinners take encouragement to continue in sin, from God's patience and long-suffering. (See Psal. l. 21. Eccles. viii. 11.)

Ver. 12. *I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.*] I will shew thee thy deserts, and give thee a view of thy deeds, which then will appear quite of another sort, than what thy own self-conceit makes thee believe them to be; and see whether thou canst ground any hope or comfort in them.

Ver. 13. *When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee,* &c.] Let thy allies or associates help thee, whose assistance thou hast taken such pains to procure. (See ver. 9.) But they will not be able to deliver themselves. (Compare Jer. xxii. 22.)

But he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.] Those that still depend upon me, and make use of none of these indirect means to preserve themselves, shall return from captivity, and enjoy their native country, and the opportunities of attending upon my service, either by themselves, or in their posterity. The prophets, after they have denounced God's threatenings against the Jews, do usually conclude with promises of receiving them again into favour upon their amendment; to shew that that nation have still a title to the promises made by God unto their fathers, whenever they will render themselves worthy to receive them. (See Rom. xi. 29.)

Ver. 14. *And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,* &c.] Or, *It shall be said,* or, *orders shall be given:* for the verb active is here used impersonally, as is frequent in other places. (See the note on xliv. 18.) The words imply, that God will take care of facilitating the return of the faithful out of captivity, and will remove all impediments that may hinder their passage home, just as if harbingers were to go before them, and plane the roads for them. (See xl. 3. lxii. 10.)

Ver. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit,* &c.] Though my throne be in heaven, yet I do not disdain to converse with the lowly and meek, and such as humble themselves under my hand, whom I will relieve, and comfort in their afflictions. (Compare lxvi. 2. John xiv. 23.)

Ver. 16. *For I will not contend for ever—for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.*] God hath compassion upon the work of his hands, and does not deal with men according to the rigour of justice, else they would quickly be brought to nothing. (See Psal. lxxviii. 39. ciii. 13, 14. Jer. x. 24.)

Ver. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness.*] See lvi. 11. lix. 4, &c.

I hid me, and was wroth.] God's withdrawing his mercy or protection, is expressed by *hiding his face.* (See viii. 17. Deut. xxxii. 20. Job xiii. 24. Lam. iii. 44.)

Ver. 18. *I have seen his ways, and will heal him.*] I have seen a reformation of his manners, and will remove my heavy judgments. (Compare lviii. 8. lix. 20. Jer. xxxi. 19, 20.)

I will restore comforts to him, and to his mourners.] To those that mourn over the desolations of God's church and people, and lament for the sins which brought down these sad calamities. (Compare lxi. 2. lxvi. 10. Jer. xiii. 17. Ezek. ix. 4.)

Ver. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips.*] I give new occasion for praise and thanksgiving, by the mercies I confer upon my people. (Compare Heb. xiii. 15.)

Peace, peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near.] As God's promises of favour upon repentance, mentioned in the foregoing verses, have a great deal of the gospel-spirit in them: so the peace here proclaimed cannot be properly understood but of those terms of pardon which Christ hath offered both to Jew and gentile, as St. Paul expounds the text, Ephes. ii. 17.

Ver. 20, 21. *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,* &c.] The wicked cannot hope to enjoy either peace of mind, or outward prosperity; their inward guilt gives them perpetual disquiet, makes them restless and unsettled, and God will not vouchsafe them those outward blessings which he promises to such as are sincere converts. (See ver. 15. 18. and the note upon xlviii. 22.)

CHAP. LVIII.

ARGUMENT.

God having promised mercy to those that repent, and threatened judgments to the obstinate, in the fifteenth and following verses of the last chapter, the prophet here instructs them how they ought to perform the duties of repentance and humiliation upon the solemn times set apart for that purpose: such was the great day of expiation, (Lev. xvi. 29.) and other fasts appointed upon extraordinary occasions.

Ver. 1. *SHEW my people their transgressions.*] Especially the iniquities of their holy things, and the hypocrisy of their religious services. (See the following verses.)

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Ver. 2. *Yet they seek me daily.*] To *seek* God is the same as to *draw nigh* unto him in his ordinances, such as are prayer, repentance, reading or hearing his word, or any other religious exercise, which may inform us of his will, and procure us his favour.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore have we afflicted our soul?*] By fasting and humiliation: a phrase used particularly of the great day of expiation, (Lev. xvi. 29. xxiii. 27.)

Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and you exact all your labours.] Or, as the words may more significantly be rendered, *You find wherewithal to please yourselves, and you are rigorous in grieving, or burdening others.* You gratify your own passions, especially your covetousness, and you oppress the poor, and so are defective in the duties both of justice and charity, as it follows.

Ver. 4. *Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.*] Your fasts have the appearance of devotion, but their true design is only to promote parties and contention, and to oppress the innocent: such was that fast we read of 1 Kings xxi. 10.

Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.] The prophet seems to have made this discourse upon some extraordinary day of humiliation, when it was usual for the prophets to make public exhortations to the people: (see Jer. xxxvi. 6.) and he tells them in this verse, that their fasts ought not to be like this which they now kept, which consisted only in being noisy in the worship of God, as if their outward vehemency would make their prayers reach to heaven; whereas it was sincere and inward piety alone which gave access to the throne of grace. Solemn humiliations are elsewhere expressed by *crying unto the Lord,* (Joel i. 14.) and *crying mightily unto God,* (Jonah iii. 8.)

Ver. 5. *Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?*] These were ceremonies which accompanied fasting. (See Matt. vi. 16. Jonah iii. 6.)

Ver. 6. *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness,* &c.] It is a common phraseology of Scripture, to express the preference that is due to one thing before another, by terms which express the rejecting of that which is less worthy: so when God saith, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,* (Hos. vi. 6.) the meaning is, that mercy is to be preferred before sacrifice. Just thus the prophet speaks of fasting here, as a thing in itself of little or no use: (though elsewhere God expressly enjoins it, both in the Old and New Testament: see Lev. xxiii. 29. Matt. ix. 15.) to shew how much mercy is to be preferred, without which fasting will not avail any thing.

To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, &c.] These several expressions signify the forbearing severe exactions upon insolvent debtors, griping usury, (see Nehem. v.) and especially keeping servants in slavery, without allowing them the benefit of release at the end of seven years, which the law expressly required, (Exod. xxi. 2.) but the hard-hearted Jews would by no means comply with. (See Jer. xxxiv. 8, &c.)

Ver. 7. *And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.*] From those of thine own kindred, thy brethren, or countrymen. (See the notes on ix. 20. xlix. 26.)

Ver. 8. *Then shall thy light break forth as the morning.*] As the light breaks forth out of the darkness; so thy low and afflicted condition shall be suddenly changed into a happy and glorious one. (Compare ix. 1, 2. Job xi. 17. and here, ver. 10.)

And thine health shall spring forth speedily.] As calamities are often expressed by wounds or sickness: (see i. 7. Jer. xv. 18.) so the restoring any person or nation to their former prosperity, is expressed by healing them. (See xix. 22. lvii. 19. Jer. ix. 22.)

And thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.] God's favour protecting thine innocence, shall both guide and defend thee. (See the note on lii. 12.)

Ver. 9. *If thou take from the midst of thee the yoke.*] See ver. 6.

The putting forth of the finger.] The expression probably alludes to some gesture they used in their conversation, whether of mocking or threatening others: or it may signify any the least attempt towards the invading the right of others. (Compare lix. 3. see Psal. cxxv. 3.) *To put forth the hand unto iniquity,* is to offer at something which is not consistent with righteousness or justice.

And speaking vanity.] Vanity here means falsehood and deceit, which is too often used in men's dealings with each other: so the word is taken, lix. 4. where our translation renders it *iniquity.*

Ver. 10. *And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry.*] If thou extend thy compassions to him that is in need. A charitable temper is commonly expressed by a *large* soul, as a niggardly person is called a *narrow-souled* man, whose thoughts and affections are confined wholly to himself and his own concerns.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought,* &c.] *Drought* is put for any sort of want, because dry ground is barren, and destitute of all conveniences for the support of life. And therefore God's grace and blessing is often represented by the metaphor of watering dry ground with streams and rivers, as it follows here, *Thou shalt be like a watered garden,* &c. (Compare xxx. 24. xxxv. 6. xli. 18. xliv. 3.)

And make fat thy bones.] The phrase denotes a good habit of body: (compare Job xxi. 24. Prov. iii. 8.) as dry bones signify the state of death. (Ezek. xxxvii. 4.)

Ver. 12. *And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places.*] Shall rebuild those houses and cities which have of a long time laid ruinous (compare lxi. 4. and see the note there), and have been razed from the very foundations. (See Psal. cxxxvii. 7.)

The Restorer of paths to dwell in.] When the cities which have lain desolate are reinhabited, the roads that lead to them will be again frequented. (Compare Judg. v. 6. Psal. cvii. 7.)

Ver. 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from my sabbath,* &c.] If thou abstain from following thy own ways and pleasure on the sabbath, the day dedicated to my service. From hence it appears, that the precept of *keeping the sabbath-day holy,* did not enjoin merely a bodily rest; but implied likewise setting the day apart for the services of religion. Why the prophet lays such stress upon keeping the sabbath-day, see the note on lvi. 2. (Compare likewise Jer. xvii. 21, 22, &c.)

Ver. 14. *Then shall thou delight thyself in the Lord.*]

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Thou shalt be such a proficient in godliness, that God's service shall become delightful unto thee; (see Psal. xxxiv. 8.) not burdensome, as it was to those Jews whom the prophet Amos reproves, (viii. 5.)

And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.] I will exalt thee above thy neighbouring nations, and give thee possession of their mountains, whither they use to betake themselves, as to an impregnable fortress. (Compare Deut. xxxii. 13. xxxiii. 29. Ezek. xxxvi. 2.)

And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.] Thou shalt enjoy the land I gave to him, and all those blessings which I promised to him and his posterity.

CHAP. LIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Jews seem to call God's power into question, because he did not deliver them from their enemies, as he had formerly done. In answer to which cavil, the prophet tells them, it is not defect of power in God, but their own sins which hinder him from shewing his former favours towards them. However, he promises that God will at length visit and redeem them, not out of any regard to their merits, but purely for the sake of his own honour, and to make good his former promises.

Ver. 1, 2. *BEHOLD, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear,* &c.] The reason of the continuance of your calamities is not want, either of power in God to deliver you, or of goodness to hear your prayers: but your own iniquities make him a stranger to you, interrupt the correspondence that used to be between God and his people, and stop the course of his blessings.

Ver. 4. *None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth,* &c.] There is no consideration had for justice, either in the public judicatories, or in men's private dealings. The arguments taken from right and wrong have no place in resolutions.

They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.] They form mischievous designs in their minds, which they afterward put in execution. (Compare Job xv. 35. Psal. vii. 14.)

Ver. 5. *They hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spider's web,* &c.] The same sense couched in metaphorical terms; their villanous contrivances being compared, first to a cockatrice's eggs, which are rank poison in themselves, and when they are hatched produce a venomous serpent: and then to a spider's web, both for the artificial fineness of them, and because they are as so many nets to entrap others.

Ver. 6. *Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.*] Though their contrivances are finely wrought, yet they are too thin and weak to be of any real advantage: (see Job viii. 14.) and their works can neither cover nor defend the actors.

Ver. 8. *They have made them crooked paths.*] They have turned aside out of the way of God's commandments, which are a plain and straight way. (Compare Psal. cxxv. 5. Prov. ii. 15. iv. 27.)

Ver. 9. *Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us.*] Because we have no regard to justice nor honesty, God will not plead our cause against our oppressors.

We wait for light, but behold obscurity.] We still hope for better times, but are under a cloud, in a dismal condition. Compare lviii. 8. where happiness is expressed by the *breaking forth of light.*

Ver. 10. *We grope for the wall like the blind.*] We are surrounded with darkness, and have no glimmering of light or comfort; so that we know not which way to turn ourselves. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 29.)

We are in desolate places as dead men.] We are banished from the world, as the dead that have no longer any portion in it: the same sense is thus expressed, Psal. xliv. 19. *Thou hast smitten us into the place of dragons,* (or serpents, that frequent solitary places: see the note upon xiii. 19.) *and covered us with the shadow of death.*

Ver. 11. *We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves.*] Sometimes we cry aloud; at other times we bemoan ourselves after a more silent manner. (Compare xxxviii. 14.)

Ver. 12. *For our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities we know them.*] Our sins are so public and notorious, that they fly in our faces, as it were, and our conscience gives full evidence against us.

Ver. 13. *In transgressing and lying against the Lord.*] See lvii. 11.

Ver. 14. *And justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter.*] Justice is described as if it were afraid to venture itself among such a crew of miscreants, where truth and integrity can find no admittance, or else are trampled under foot, and treated with the utmost contempt and insolence.

Ver. 16. *And he saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation to him.*] The words are parallel with those of Ezek. xxii. 30. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land—but I found none." To the same purpose God saith here, That it was just matter of wonder, that scarce a righteous man should be found that might intercede with him by his prayers for the averting the Divine judgments. (Compare lxiv. 7.) When things were come to this pass, he wrought for his own name's sake, and was resolved to exert his power for the delivering of his people, not out of any regard to their merits, but purely for his own honour, and to make good his former promises. (Compare lxiii. 5.)

And his righteousness, it sustained him.] His justice in protecting the innocent, and punishing the wicked, made him go through with the undertaking in spite of all opposition.

Ver. 17. *For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head.*] The prophet describes God as a warrior completely armed: the two most considerable pieces of armour are those which defend the vital parts, the head and breast. To these he compares God's faithfulness in performing his promises, and that salvation, or deliverance, which he will work for his people.

And he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.] His indignation against his enemies, and his zeal for his own honour, (see the note on ix. 7.) supplied the place of other accoutrements which belong to a soldier.

Ver. 18. *To the islands he will pay recompence.*] He will

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severely punish the foreign nations which have been the oppressors of God's people; (see ver. 10, 11.) and make them feel the same miseries they have inflicted upon others. (See the note upon xxi. 2.) The Jews call all countries *islands* which they go to by sea. (See note on xi. 11.)

Ver. 19. *So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.*] God's thus appearing in behalf of his people, shall make his name and power known far and near.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.] When nothing seems able to withstand the enemy, but he carries all before him, as the flood overturns a country, then God himself will give him a remarkable check, and visibly interpose in behalf of his oppressed people. (Compare xxxi. 9.)

Ver. 20. *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion.*] This and the following verse are expounded by St. Paul of that general restoration of the Jewish nation, which he assures us shall come to pass in the latter times. (See Rom. xi. 26, 27. compare Obad. ver. 17. 21.) And the words of the foregoing verse, which speak of God's name being feared from one end of the world to the other, do plainly look that way, as also the following chapter.

And unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob.] God's promises are only made to the penitent. (Compare lvii. 15. 18. lviii. 8. and see the notes upon xxvii. 12. xlviii. 22. liv. 13.)

Ver. 21. *My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth,* &c.] This must be understood of Christ, the great prophet and oracle of the church, who came from heaven to declare unto us the whole counsel of God, and whom we are to hear and obey in all things. (Compare li. 16. lxi. 1.) The words contain a promise to the church, his spiritual children, (compare viii. 18.) of being *guided by God's Spirit into all truth,* and that this Spirit shall *continue with them for ever.* Which promise shall receive its utmost completion, when God's *people shall be all righteous,* and *shall be taught of him.* (See liv. 13. lx. 21.)

CHAP. LX.

ARGUMENT.

We may suppose the ground-work of the prophecies, contained in this and the two following chapters, to be the Jews' restoration from captivity; but any discerning reader may easily be satisfied, that the prophet takes occasion from thence to describe the glories of Christ's kingdom, which began upon the first publication of the gospel, but will not be completed till the fulness of the Jews and gentiles are come into the church; which is the general subject of the prophecies which follow to the end of the book. The reasons Mr. White hath advanced against this interpretation, shall be considered under each verse of this chapter, from whence he takes them.

Ver. 1. *ARISE, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*] It is a usual metaphor to describe happiness by light, and affliction by darkness. So here Jerusalem is bid to *arise* from the ground or the dust, where her afflictions had laid her low, and like the morning star, or sun, to give light to all about her, and communicate to others part of that honour and lustre which she hath received from God, the true *Sun of righteousness.* (Compare Mal. iv. 2.)

Ver. 2, 3. *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth —but the Lord shall arise upon thee. And the gentiles shall come to thy light.*] When ignorance, like a thick darkness, overspreads the world, then shall the light of God's truth, like the *day-spring from on high,* diffuse itself over the earth, and excite the gentiles to seek instruction from the church as from an oracle. (Compare ii. 3.)

Ver. 3. *And kings to the brightness of thy rising.*] The graces and glories of the church shall attract the eyes of kings, and make them willing to become her proselytes. (Compare xlix. 23.)

Ver. 4. *All they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.*] The prophet describes the fulness of the church by the gentiles coming into it, and bringing the dispersed remainder of the Jews along with them, (see the note on xi. 12.) whom they are said to take the same care of in their journey as a nurse does of a sucking child. For to that sense, I think, the last words of the verse should be rendered, *And thy daughters shall be nursed at their side.* (Compare xlix. 22. Deut. i. 31.)

Ver. 5. *Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged.*] Thy joy shall break out upon thee like an overflowing river; and the sudden transports of it shall produce an astonishment like that which ariseth from the impressions of fear; for which reason the effects of one passion are ascribed to the other: the prophet Jeremiah useth the same metaphor, (xxxiii. 9.) "They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure unto it." The same figure occurs in Lucretius, lib. ii. init.

——"Ita me quædam divina voluptas
Inficit, atque horror."——

Because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.] A multitude of people is compared to many waters, xvii. 12. Rev. xvii. 15. Or the words may be understood of the multitude of those that came from the sea, as if the sea had transported all its passengers hither. (See ver. 9.) Others explain it of the riches which are brought by sea, and dedicated to God's service; (see ver. 6.) in which sense the word *hamon* is used, Eccles. v. 10. and so the Septuagint here understand it. The following words explain this of the fulness of the gentiles coming into the church.

The forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee.] Others render it, *The riches of the gentiles.* (See ver. 6. 16. and lxi. 6.)

Ver. 6. *The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come.*] The Arabians had great stocks of camels, and such-like beasts of burden. (See Judg. vi. 5. vii. 12.) Ephah was a son of Midian; (see Gen. xxv. 4.) from whom part of that country had its name.

They shall bring gold and incense.] The conversion of heathen nations is elsewhere expressed by their bringing offerings to God, and dedicating part of their wealth to his service. (See xviii. 7. xxiii. 18.) This may be farther verified in that glorious state of the church, described Rev. xxi. 24. 26.

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Ver. 7. *All the flocks of Kedar shall come unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee.*] Kedar and Nebaioth were two sons of Ishmael, who settled themselves in Arabia. (See Gen. xxv. 13.) Their substance did chiefly consist in their cattle, with which they travelled from one place to another, according as they could find pasture. (See Judg. vi. 5. and the note upon xxi. 13.)

They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar.] This may in some measure be understood of the offerings brought out of the neighbouring countries to the second temple. (See the note on xlv. 14.) But the whole scope of the chapter plainly regards the coming of the gentiles into the church, and dedicating part of their substance to the service of God: nor is this expression *a demonstration to the contrary*, as Mr. White too confidently pronounces, in as much as nothing is more usual than for the prophets to describe the state of the Christian church, by representations taken from the Jewish temple and service. (See the notes on xix. 19. lvi. 8. lxvi. 23.)

Ver. 8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?*] A flock of birds resembles a dark cloud: so the prophet here compares the multitudes of people that flock to the church, to a flock of pigeons that fly to their dove-houses.

Ver. 9. *Surely the isles shall wait for me.*] Compare xlii. 4. li. 5. The expression denotes their readiness to embrace the gospel whenever the means of grace are offered to them. So Christ is said to be *the Desire of all nations*, Hag. ii. 7. as he that alone could answer all their wishes and expectations.

And the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them.] Ships of Tarshish mean any ships of trade or commerce. (See the note on ii. 16.) These, the text saith, shall be principally subservient to God's design in bringing the sons of Zion (which, taken in a mystical sense, is the mother of all believers, Gal. iv. 26.) from distant countries, who will bring their free-will-offerings and religious acknowledgments along with them. (See ver. 6.) The words are an allusion to the law which enjoined that *none should appear empty before the Lord*, at the times of the solemn festivals, (Deut. xvi. 16.) To which custom of going up to Jerusalem at those solemn times, the expressions, so often found in the prophets, allude, of the *gentiles seeking after the Lord*, of their *going up to Jerusalem*, and the like. (See the note on ii. 3.) So that it is a great mistake in Mr. White, to conclude from such-like expressions in this chapter, that the prophet's words cannot be expounded of the gentiles coming into the church.

Unto the name of the Lord thy God.] God chose the temple in Jerusalem *to place his name there;* (1 Kings viii. 29.) and this temple was a type of the Christian church. (See Ezek. xlviii. 35. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 2 Thess. ii. 4.)

Ver. 10. *And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister to thee.*] This may be, in some measure, fulfilled in the assistance which Cyrus and his successors gave to the restoring and re-edifying of the city and temple. (See note on xlv. 14.) But the words received a farther accomplishment in the honours which the gentiles (commonly called *strangers* by the Jews, see lvi. 3.) and their kings paid to the church of Christ, (compare xlix. 23. Zech. vi. 15.) and may yet receive a farther accomplishment. (See Rev. xxi. 24.)

For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.] I will abundantly recompense thee for the afflictions which I have brought upon thee. (Compare liv. 7, 8.)

Ver. 11. *Therefore thy gates shall be open continually*, &c.] It is a sign of a settled peace, and that there is no fear of an enemy, when the gates of a city stand always open. (Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 11.) So the poet describes a profound peace, by *apertis otia portis*. The phrase signifies withal, that there shall be such a confluence of people to the church, and even of the highest rank and dignity, that the gates must continually stand open to give them admittance.

Ver. 12. *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.*] This must relate to the *latter days*, as the Scripture calls them, when the church shall become *a great mountain, and break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth*, according to Daniel's prophecy, (Dan. ii. 35. 44.) and then the faithful shall *have power over the nations, and rule* the refractory *with a rod of iron*, as it is foretold Rev. ii. 26, 27.

Ver. 13. *The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee*, &c.] Lebanon was reckoned one of the pleasantest parts of Judea: (see xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2.) and was particularly beautiful for its tall cedars. (See xxxvii. 24.) So the expression denotes, that the cedars, and whatever other trees grow in Lebanon, shall contribute to the re-edifying and beautifying God's temple, which is called here the *place of God's feet*, as the ark is elsewhere called his *footstool*, because the Divine Schechinah, or glory, sat between the two cherubims, which were placed over the ark. (See Psal. cxxxii. 7.) This implies, in the spiritual sense, every thing that tends to the adorning and perfecting the church, which is called the *house* and *building* of God. (See 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Ephes. ii. 20. and compare Zech. vi. 12, 13.)

Ver. 14. *The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee.*] They shall acknowledge the errors of their fathers, and instead of being persecutors, shall become proselytes.

And they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.] See the note on xlix. 23. and compare Rev. iii. 9.

And they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.] Mr. White is pleased to say, in his argument upon this chapter, that the *church cannot, with any propriety of speech, be called the city of the Lord*, or *the Zion of the Holy One of Israel*. This must seem a strange assertion to any one that hath read the New Testament, where the church, as consisting of all its members both militant and triumphant, and united together under God and Christ, is expressly called *Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and the heavenly Jerusalem;* of which the city on earth called by that name was a figure, Heb. xii. 22. *The Lamb, i. e.* Christ, is said to *stand upon Mount Zion*, Rev. xiv. 1. Christ is called the *corner-stone placed in Zion*, whereon the church is built and supported, 1 Pet. ii. 6. and he is called the *Deliverer*, or Redeemer, *that shall come out of Zion*, Rom. xi. 26.

Ver. 15. *Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency*, &c.] This may in the first sense be fitly applied to Jerusalem, which, during the captivity, lay desolate, and

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was the subject of scorn and reproach to all her neighbours: (see Lam. ii. 15.) but afterward recovered some degree of her ancient glory. And may be applied to the church and nation of the Jews, whenever God shall please to restore them, after their having been so long rejected by him. (Compare lxi. 4. 7.) But some of the expressions used in this verse, as well as the context, do plainly look further; and import, that although the true professors of Christianity, in several ages and places, have been the subject of men's scorn and contempt; (see Matt. x. 22. Luke vi. 22.) and the church itself is to continue for some ages in a mournful and *sackcloth* condition: (see Rev. xi. 3.) yet it shall at last surmount all these difficulties, and be placed out of the reach of the malice of its enemies.

Ver. 16. *Thou shalt also suck the milk of the gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings.*] Ye shall be nourished with their riches, as a child is with the breast. (See ver. 6. xlix. 23. lxi. 6. lxvi. 12.)

Ver. 17. *For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver.*] A description of *golden days*, as we commonly call them: and as it is said of Solomon's times, that gold and silver were so plenty, there was no use made of inferior metals; (1 Kings x. 21. 27.) in pursuance of the same metaphor, the New Jerusalem is described as made of *pure gold*, (Rev. xxi. 18.)

I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.] *Peace* here is put for *men of peace*, as the word is used Psal. cxx. 7. and *righteousness*, for *righteous men*, as our translators render the word, xli. 2. The prophet says, that, in those happy days he hath been describing, the very officers of the public revenues, and collectors of the taxes, shall be lovers of peace, and observers of justice: a sort of men generally blamed for being guilty of exaction and oppression: (see Luke iii. 13.) the same sense is more plainly expressed in the following words.

Ver. 18. *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.*] Thou shalt be secure from violence and injustice at home, and from invasion or war from abroad.

But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.] Or, as the sense might more plainly be expressed, *Thou shalt call Salvation thy walls, and Praise thy gates:* God's protection and salvation shall be unto thee instead of walls and bulwarks, and the praises which thou continually offerest up to him for his mercies, shall supply the room of gates and bars. (Compare xxvi. 1. Psal. xxxii. 7.)

Ver. 19. *The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee,* &c.] God's favour and the light of his countenance shall give thee greater comfort and lustre, than the light of the sun and moon doth to the world: which promise will be fully verified in the state of the New Jerusalem, where there will be no vicissitude of day and night, for *the glory of God, and of the Lamb, are the light thereof,* (Rev. xxi. 23. xxii. 6.)

Ver. 20. *Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself.*] Thou shalt see no more sorrow nor affliction, which are often expressed by darkness, and the sun and moon's withdrawing themselves. (See the notes upon xiii. 10.)

Ver. 21. *Thy people also shall be all righteous.*] Compare i. 26. This character can belong only to the New Jerusalem. (See Rev. xxi. 27.) For in the present state of the church, the chaff and tares will always be mixed with the wheat, till Christ come to part them. (See Matt. iii. 10. xiii. 30.)

They shall inherit the land for ever.] This must be meant of the blessed millenium, when Christ and his saints shall reign upon earth. (See Matt. v. 5. Rev. v. 10. xx. 4. xxi. 3, 4. 7.)

The branch of my planting, the work of my hands.] God's elect, those whom he hath called by an extraordinary measure of grace, and appointed to be *heirs of salvation*, are styled *his own plantation*, and *the work of his hands:* regeneration being frequently called a new creation, because men's justification and salvation is wholly owing to God's grace and goodness. (See xxix. 23. xlv. 11. Matt. xv. 13. John xv. 2. Ephes. ii. 10.)

Ver. 22. *A little one shall become a thousand,* &c.] This glorious kingdom of Christ shall take its rise from small beginnings: so Daniel describes Christ's kingdom as a *stone*, which in process of time became *a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,* (Dan. ii. 35.) which will be verified in God's due time.

CHAP. LXI.

ARGUMENT.

The same subject is still prosecuted, and Christ is introduced declaring his commission, full of grace and comfort to his church, with particular promises of grace to the Jewish church, whom he promises to receive into favour again, after she had been a long time rejected and forsaken; who thereupon is represented as in a transport of joy and thankfulness.

Ver. 1. *THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me.*] *Anointing* denotes some extraordinary gift or grace bestowed upon men by God, because the three great offices of *king, priest*, and *prophet*, were conferred by this ceremony. The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the human nature of our Saviour, supplied this external unction, (see Acts x. 38.) and qualified him for the office of a prophet beyond all others that were before him, because he had the Spirit given to him *without measure*, (John iii. 34.) and in this respect was *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.* (See the note upon xi. 2.)

We have Christ's own authority for applying this text to himself, (Luke iv. 18.)

To preach good tidings to the meek.] Or, *To preach the gospel to the poor*, as the words are rendered by the Septuagint, whom the evangelists follow, (Luke iv. 18. Matt. xi. 5.) The humble and poor in spirit have a peculiar title to the privileges of the gospel. (See the notes on xi. 4. xxvi. 6.) And persons of a mean condition, such whose affections were not too much set upon the glories of the world, were those who most readily embraced it, when it was first preached. (See 1 Cor. i. 26. 27. Jam. ii. 5.)

He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted.] To give ease to those that are grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins: a metaphor taken from surgeons binding up wounds. (See i. 6.)

To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of

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the prison to them that are bound.] See the notes upon xlii. 7. The Septuagint render the latter part of the sentence, *recovering of sight to the blind,* and so St. Luke reads; which interpretation several learned men have shewed to be very agreeable to the original.

Ver. 2. *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*] In allusion to the proclaiming the year of jubilee, which was done by sound of trumpet, (Lev. xxv. 9.) when there was a general release of all manner of servitude, debts, and obligations; (Jer. xxxiv. 8.) a type of that freedom which Christ hath purchased for us.

And the day of vengeance of our God.] Mr. White observes, that our Saviour takes no notice of this passage in his recital of this prophecy, (Luke iv. 18.) from whence he concludes, that *he is no way concerned in it:* it was not, indeed, the business of Christ's first coming, to take vengeance of his enemies, and for that reason he might not mention it at his first entrance into his office; though we find, in several of his discourses, he threatened the Jews with destruction for their rejecting him; (see Matt. xxi. 43, 44. xxii. 7. xxiii. 36.) and he calls the destruction of Jerusalem *the days of vengeance,* (Luke xxi. 22.) the very expression of the text; which does most properly relate to his second coming, when he will not only reward his servants, but justify their innocence, by the terrible judgments he will inflict upon his and their enemies. (Compare xxxiv. 8. lxiii. 4. lxvi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. 43. Jer. li. 9, 10. Mal. iv. 3. Luke xix. 27. 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.)

To comfort those that mourn in Zion.] That mourn for their own iniquities, and for the public sins and calamities. (See the notes on lvii. 18.) In like manner, our Saviour's sermon upon the mount begins with promising *comfort* to those that *mourn,* (Matt. v. 4.)

Ver. 3. *To appoint* [comfort] *to them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*] A description of the change that should be in their outward habit and appearance, in proportion to the change of their circumstances. Whereas, whilst they were mourners, they used to put ashes on their heads; (see 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Lam. ii. 10.) now they should wear a crown or diadem (for the word *pear* signifies an ornament proper for the head, Ezek. xxiv. 17.) in token of their joy. (See the note on xxxv. 10.) They should likewise anoint themselves, which they abstained from in times of mourning; (see Dan. x. 3. Matt. vi. 17.) and change their mourning garments for festival ones. (See Zech. iii. 3—5. Luke xv. 22.)

That they might be called Trees of righteousness.] The righteous are elsewhere resembled to fruitful and flourishing trees. (See Psal. i. 3. xcii. 12.)

The planting of the Lord.] See lx. 21.

Ver. 4. *And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations,* &c.] We may interpret this to a spiritual sense, of repairing what is decayed by ignorance and corruption: (see the notes upon xlix. 8.) but if we suppose the Jews, after their conversion, to return into their own land, an opinion countenanced by several prophecies of the Old Testament, (see the notes upon xi. 11.) we may fitly explain this text of their re-edifying their ancient habitations. (Compare Ezek. xxxvi. 33—36.) And this interpretation agrees very well with the following words, *the desolations of many generations.*

Ver. 5. *And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vine-dressers.*] By strangers and aliens may be meant those gentiles who are *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,* and *strangers from the covenants of promise,* as St. Paul calls them, Eph. ii. 12. (Compare lxii. 8.) And the promise of *having power over the nations,* is not only made to Christ, but likewise to his faithful servants. (See Rev. ii. 26, 27. and the note upon xiv. 2.)

Ver. 6. *But ye shall be named Priests of the Lord,* &c.] If we suppose these words contain a peculiar promise to the Jews, after their conversion, they import, that God will restore to them that honourable title of being *a kingdom of priests,* formerly given to them, (Exod. xix. 6.) and admit them to a near attendance upon himself: accordingly some learned men suppose the Jewish church represented in the Revelation, by the *four-and-twenty elders* (alluding to the *four-and-twenty courses* of the priests), *clothed in white raiment* (as priests), *and having on their heads crowns of gold,* as advanced to a regal dignity: (Rev. iv. 8.) but this privilege of being *priests to God,* does in some degree belong to all Christians; (see 1 Pet. ii. 5.) especially when they shall come to be wholly freed from the bondage of sin, and continually employed in God's service. (See Rev. v. 10. xx. 6.)

And in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.] All that cost and riches, which the gentile converts shall dedicate to the service of God, shall redound to your honour, and the glory of that religion which you teach and profess. (Compare lx. 5, 6. 16. lxvi. 12. Rev. xxi. 24.)

But I must not conceal an ingenious exposition of these two verses, communicated to me by a learned friend, to this purpose. First of all (so he interprets *And* in the beginning of the fifth verse), the gentiles shall minister, and feed the flock, *i. e.* the church; whose office is likewise expressed here, by their being *ploughmen* and *vine-dressers;* as the church is called God's *vineyard,* (v. 7.) and believers, *his husbandry,* or *tillage,* (1 Cor. iii. 9.) Afterward, (so he explains the copulative particle *vau* at the beginning of the sixth verse; in which sense it is sometimes taken; see 2 Kings iv. 35. Psal. xci. 16.) you Jews shall be converted and become ministers of the church, and the gentiles shall make a plentiful provision for you, as the priests under the law were maintained by the sacrifices and offerings which were brought to the temple: and yourselves having been made partakers of that grace and knowledge, for which the gentiles so much value themselves, you shall become the glorious instruments of converting the remainder of them, who as yet continue in unbelief. (See lxvi. 19, 20.)

Ver. 7. *For your shame ye shall have double.*] An allusion to God's blessing Job after his afflictions, when *he gave him double to what he had before,* (Job xlii. 10. compare Zech. ix. 12.) Hereby ye shall have abundant recompence for the shame and reproach ye underwent during your long rejection. (See liv. 4.)

Therefore in their land shall they possess the double.] This double honour and reward mentioned in the foregoing sentence. As the first-born had a double share in his father's estate, (Deut. xxi. 17.) so the Jews, when converted to the Christian faith, shall recover their birthright which they had forfeited by their infidelity, as Esau did, and be esteemed the *first-born,* or elder brethren, in the church of

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God. Accordingly some learned men, who expound the *elders* in the Revelation of the Jewish believers, (see the note upon ver. 6.) observe, that in those visions of the church which relate to the times antecedent to the general conversion of the Jews, the *elders* are placed after the *four living creatures*, as having lost their dignity and precedency. (See Rev. v. 8. 11. xiv. 3.)

Some translate the whole verse thus, *Instead of your double* (or reiterated) *shame and confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore they shall possess their land a second time* (so the Septuagint render the words), *everlasting joy shall be unto them; i. e.* they shall no more be driven out of it. (Compare lx. 15.)

Ver. 8. *For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering.*] God saith at the end of the verse, that he *will make an everlasting covenant with them*, which must be understood of the gospel. (See lv. 3.) To the tenor of that covenant, consisting of inward righteousness, (see Jer. xxxi. 33.) he opposes that outward ceremonial service prescribed by the former covenant, which very often had no inward devotion accompanying it. Nay, some were so presumptuous, as to think they could propitiate God Almighty, by offering to him part of what they had got by deceit and violence.

And I will direct their work in truth.] I will give them grace to serve me in spirit and in truth; or, as the words may be translated, *I will give them their reward faithfully.* The Hebrew word *penulah* signifying both *work* and *reward.* (See xl. 10. lxii. 11.)

Ver. 9. *And their seed shall be known among the gentiles.*] They shall be illustrious or remarkable among the gentile Christians; (so the word *known* is used, Psal. lxxvii. 1. Prov. xxxi. 23.) they shall be acknowledged for God's ancient people, to whom all the promises of the gospel were made, and to whom they principally belong; (see Acts iii. 26. xiii. 46.) they shall be esteemed as the first-born, or the elder brethren in the church; and this shall make them amends for the *shame* they underwent before. (See ver. 7. and the note there.)

Ver. 10. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord—for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,* &c.] The Jewish church is here introduced as speaking (see note upon lxiii. 1.) and returning her thanks to God for these great favours, that he hath advanced her and her children to such honour after their dispersion, and thereby hath made her glorious in the eyes of the world, (ver. 9. compare xlix. 18.) and hath given her occasion of perpetual joy and triumph, which useth to be expressed by putting on the richest and costliest garments. (See ver. 3.) This seems to relate to the times of the marriage of the Messiah with the Jewish synagogue, of which their cabalistical writers speak so much (see Bishop Patrick's Preface to his exposition on the Canticles): or rather, to his marriage with the whole church, both of Jews and gentiles. (See Rev. xix. 7.) *The garments of salvation*, and the *robe of righteousness*, allude to the high-priest's robes, which were made for *glory and beauty*, Exod. xxviii. 2. (Compare Psal. cxxxii. 9. 16.) *The robe of righteousness* is an allusion to the *linen ephod*, an emblem of righteousness and holiness; (see Rev. xix. 8.) as also of joy and gladness: (see Eccles. ix. 8.) which is likewise denoted by the *garments of salvation*, i. e. such festival attire as should testify their joy in God's salvation. This habit very fitly belongs to those who are named to be *priests of the Lord*, (ver. 6.) and the word which our translation renders *decked himself*, properly signifies a priest's habiting himself with the ornaments proper to his office.

And as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.] So the New Jerusalem is described as *a bride adorned for her husband*, Rev. xxi. 2. (Compare lxii. 4, 5.)

Ver. 11. *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud—so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.*] As surely as the earth in due time brings forth its plants, and a garden its seeds, so surely will God make the salvation of the Jewish church and people remarkable before all the world, and make it matter of *praise in the earth*, (lxii. 7.) *Righteousness* is sometimes equivalent to happiness, or salvation: (see note on lxii. 1.) or if we take it in the common sense of the word, to which the *robe of righteousness*, mentioned in the foregoing verse, does very well agree, then the sense is, that when holiness and goodness flourish, this redounds to the praise and honour of God, who will then be glorified by all men.

CHAP. LXII.

ARGUMENT.

The same subject is still continued, and the former promises of restoring the Jewish church and nation are again confirmed by a solemn oath of God's, (ver. 8.) which to me is an evident proof, that this prophecy relates to a scene of affairs that is still future.

Ver. 1. *FOR Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest.*] The prophet speaks here in the person of the Messias, as he did at the beginning of the last chapter, and saith that he will never cease interceding with God, till the redemption of Israel be brought to pass. (Compare ver. 6, 7. of this chapter.)

Ibid. and Ver. 2. *Until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the gentiles shall see thy righteousness,* &c.] Till the glory and salvation, with which God will honour it, be illustrious in the eyes of all the world. (Compare lx. 1—3.) *Righteousness* is elsewhere joined with *salvation*, as equivalent to it: (see xlvi. 13. lxi. 10.) as it is joined with *glory*, in the following verse, to the same sense. (See likewise xlviii. 18. liv. 17.)

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.] That of *Hephzi-bah*, mentioned ver. 4. (Compare likewise lxv. 15.) Giving new names to persons, denotes the altering their state and condition. (See Gen. xxxii. 28. Hos. i. 6. 9. ii. 1.)

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord,* &c.] Or rather, *By the hand* (or power) *of the Lord.* A crown being the most glorious part of royal attire, whatever is most precious, honourable, or ornamental, is signified by that name. (See Job xxxi. 36. Zech. ix. 16. 1 Thess. ii. 19.) Or the phrase may mean, that God will make Jerusalem his bride. (See the following verse, and lxi. 10.) For it was the custom to put a crown upon the head of the bride and bridegroom at the time of their marriage. (See Cantic. iii. 11. Ezek. xvi. 8. 12.)

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Ver. 4. *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah,* &c.] The covenant-relation between God and his people, is represented by his being their husband. (See liv. 5. Jer. iii. 15.) This title includes both love and protection: but when God forsook them, and delivered them up for a prey to their enemies, this was a sort of divorcing himself from them, which is implied in the word *Azubah, Forsaken.* (See xlix. 14. liv. 6.) And when the land lay desolate, it was in a state of widowhood. (See liv. 1.) But now God saith, he will renew his former love towards them, and *take delight in them, as a bridegroom doth in his bride,* (ver. 5.) *Their land shall be married* to him again, and no longer in a state of widowhood and desolation, but inhabited and replenished with people; for so the Septuagint translate the word *tibbael.* (See the following verse.)

Ver. 5. *For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee.*] The word *marry* is not to be taken strictly, for it would be improper to say, that children married their mother; but as it implies living with their mother, now she is owned by her husband: her former desolations implying both loss of children and widowhood. (See xlvii. 9. xlix. 21.)

Ver. 6. *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night.*] The word *shomerim* doth properly signify those priests and Levites who kept watch day and night about the temple; and some of them at certain hours sung psalms of prayer and praise. (See 1 Chron. ix. 27. 33. xxiii. 32. 2 Chron. viii. 14. xiii. 11. Psal. cxxxiv. 2.) This their office or charge is called *mishmereth* in the Hebrew, a word derived from the same root with *shomerim.* To these the prophet compares those pious persons, who will in all ages be importunate with God for completing this blessing.

Ibid. and Ver. 7. *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,* &c.] The marginal reading is better, *Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence:* the expression alludes to the same office of the priests and Levites, who by their daily prayers and intercessions put God in mind of the state of the church, and continually importuned him for the welfare thereof. The Scripture elsewhere speaks of God after the manner of men, as one that might be overcome by importunity. (See Luke xi. 8, 9. xviii. 5—7.)

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies,* &c.] Lifting up the hand was a ceremony used in swearing. (See Deut. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xx. 5. 15.) And here God swears by that very hand which uses to be held up at the taking of an oath, *i. e.* by his power and might, as it follows, that the enemies of his people should never interrupt that peace and plenty which he gives them, but they should quietly enjoy his blessings with hearts full of thankfulness for them. This must relate to some happier condition than the Jews enjoyed after their return from captivity, when their enemies frequently invaded them, and at last the Romans destroyed both their temple and nation. And the oath which ushers in this promise, proves that it will be exactly and punctually performed.

Ver. 9. *But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.*] The expressions allude to the ordinances of the law, which required the people to spend their first-fruits, and other hallowed things, at the temple, in a thankful acknowledgment to God for his blessings. (See Deut. xii. 11, 12. xiv. 23. 26.)

Ver. 10. *Go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people,* &c.] The prophet relying upon God's oath, (ver. 8.) speaks of the general restoration of the Jews, as if it were actually a doing; and exhorts those nations, through whose territories they were to pass in their return homeward, to go out of their cities and repair the roads, raising causeways in the lower grounds, and levelling the rough and stony places. (Compare xl. 3. lvii. 14.) By this figure the prophet signifies a removal of all obstacles which might hinder their return.

Lift up a standard for the people.] To gather the dispersed. (See xi. 12.)

Ver. 11. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world.*] He hath caused the great trumpet to sound, as a signal, to gather the dispersed Jews together; (see the notes upon xxvii. 13.) or he hath sent preachers of the gospel to all parts of the world, in order to the conversion of the Jews.

Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh, &c.] Thy Saviour cometh. (Compare xl. 9, 10. Zech. ix. 9. Rev. xxii. 12.)

Ver. 12. *And they shall call them, The holy people.*] As being taken into covenant again. (See the note upon ver. 4.)

And thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.] Or rather, *Sought to,* a city had in great request. (Compare ver. 4. and Jer. xxx. 17.)

CHAP. LXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The three last chapters contained a description of the glorious state of the church in the latter days, when it should be enlarged by the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the gentiles. Now the prophet comes to describe the *day of vengeance,* mentioned lxi. 2. The beginning of the chapter is by way of dialogue between the *prophet,* or *the church,* and *Christ,* where the latter is described as returning in triumph from the slaughter of his enemies; which seems to be much the same scene which was represented chap. xxxiv. (See likewise Joel iii. 12—14.) Then follow, from the seventh verse of this chapter to the end of the sixty-fourth, devout meditations upon God's former mercies to his people, mixed with expostulations for his forsaking them, and casting them off, and humble acknowledgments of their sins, which deserved such treatment.

Ver. 1. *WHO is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah?*] The Idumeans joined with the enemies of the Jews, in bringing on the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of the captivity; for which they are severely reproved by the prophets, and threatened with utter excision: (see Psal. cxxxvii. 7. Obad. ver. 10, &c. Ezek. xxv. 12.) which accordingly came to pass. (See Mal. i. 3.) But I have already observed, in the note upon xi. 14. that it is usual for the prophets to denote the enemies of the church, in general, by the name of some country, which was remarkable for its hatred towards the Jewish nation, as the Idumeans were.

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And the prophet seems to take a hint from some remarkable calamity that befel the Edomites, to describe some more general judgment that should be inflicted upon the enemies of God's church and truth. Compare chap. xxxiv. where I observed upon the fifth and sixth verses, that the words *Edom* and *Bozrah* may be taken in an appellative sense, so as to denote, in general, a field of blood, or place of slaughter. The word *Edom* signifies originally *red as blood*, and *Bozrah* denotes *a vintage*, which, in the prophetical idiom, imports God's vengeance upon the wicked. (See Lam. i. 15. Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 19. xix. 15.) The prophets often apply the names of places to the subject-matter they are treating of: so, Joel iii. 15. the nations are summoned to the *valley of Jehoshaphat*, because the word *Jehoshaphat* signifies *God's judgment*. Again, Hos. i. 5. 11. *the valley of Jezreel*, and *the day of Jezreel*, are an allusion to the etymology of the word *Jezreel*, which signifies *the arm of God*, or *the seed of God*. (See likewise Micah i. 10. 14. and lxv. 11, 12. of this prophecy.)

This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?] Like a general marching in triumph at the head of his army, and carrying tokens of victory upon his raiment. Some explain the word *tzoeh*, in an active sense, as implying the driving his enemies before him, and bearing down all opposition.

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.] Christ's answer to the foregoing question: I am come now to fulfil all my promises, and deliver you from your enemies. Several parts of the prophetic books are written in the form of a dramatic poem, where several persons are introduced, speaking by turns, and answering one another: so, for example, chap. lxi. Christ is introduced at the beginning of the chapter, making gracious promises to the church, to which the church answers with suitable returns of joy and thankfulness, (ver. 10.) So the Song of Solomon is a Divine dialogue between the *bridegroom*, the *spouse*, and a *chorus of virgins;* and in the Revelation, Christ is often introduced as speaking in that sacred drama. This observation will sometimes account for the altering of the prophet's style from the first to the second or third person.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel?*] The dialogue is still continued, and this question is proposed by the church, or the prophet in her name. Christ, in like manner, is described *as clothed in a garment dipped in blood*, (Rev. xix. 13.)

Ver. 3. *I have trodden the wine-press alone.*] This answer of Christ's exactly agrees with what is said of him in the same chapter of the Revelation, ver. 15. that *he treads the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* (See the note upon ver. 1.)

And of the people there was none with me.] See the note upon ver. 5.

Ver. 4. *For the day of vengeance is in my heart.*] See the notes upon xxxiv. 8. lxi. 2.

Ver. 5. *And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold.*] Things were come to that extremity, that there was no appearance of succour by any human means. Those who, by their office and character, ought to have stood up in defence of oppressed truth and innocence, even they, contrary to what might have been justly expected, betrayed so good a cause, or had not the courage to defend it. So that it was time for God to interpose, and to appear in defence of his own honour and people. (Compare lix. 16.)

Therefore my own arm brought salvation to me; and my fury, it upheld me.] I was resolved to vindicate my own honour, and my zeal and concern for my people made me go through with the undertaking, in spite of all opposition. Compare Zech. viii. 2. where God saith, *I was jealous for Zion with great fury.*

Ver. 6. *And I will tread down the people in mine anger.*] Both the Septuagint and Vulgar Latin translate this, and the following sentences of this verse, in the preter-perfect tense, *I have trodden down*, &c. which agrees better with the context; where Christ is described as having his garments already stained with blood.

And make them drunk in my fury.] God's judgments are often represented by a cup of intoxicating liquor, because they astonish men, and bereave them of their usual discretion. (See the note on li. 17.)

Ver. 7. *I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord*, &c.] Here the prophet, or the church, speaks, and breaks out into a grateful acknowledgment of God's former mercies to his people, which are so many earnests of his goodness for the time to come.

Ver. 8. *For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.*] They are the people with whose ancestors I made an everlasting covenant, and they have a title to my favour, as well as their forefathers. (See Rom. xi. 28, 29.) And now their afflictions have so far corrected them, that they will not prevaricate, or apostatize, any more. So he became their Saviour, as he had been in former times.

[*Children that will not lie.*] God is introduced as speaking after the manner of men, and expecting what effect his gracious dealings might in all reason have produced. Compare Zeph. iii. 7. and see the note there.]

Ver. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted.*] When there was a necessity of punishing them in order to their amendment, he had a compassionate sense of the evils which they suffered. (See Deut. xxxii. 36. Judg. x. 16. Psal. cvi. 44, 45.) The Hebrew copies have a different reading here; the text reads *lo*, with an *aleph;* which signifies *not*, and the margin reads *lo*, with a *vau*, which signifies *him;* our translation follows the marginal reading, the Septuagint that of the text; and joining the latter part of the eighth verse with the ninth, they translate the whole period very agreeably to the present Hebrew text, thus, *He was their Saviour out of all their trouble: it was not a messenger, nor an angel, but himself delivered them:* which translation agrees very well with the sense of the original, as will appear by the following note.

And the angel of his presence saved them.] The angel, who conducted them by the pillar of cloud and of fire, was no other than the Logos, or second person of the blessed Trinity, according to the sense of the ancient Jews, as Dr. Alix hath proved at large, in his Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, chap. 13—15. This Divine person is sometimes, indeed, called an angel, as Exod. xiv. 19. but, at other times, the incommunicable name of Jehovah is given to him. So Exod. xiii. 21. it is said expressly, that the *Lord went before the people in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night.* (Compare Exod. xiv. 24.) In the same book God saith of him, that

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his name is in him, i. e. his godhead, (xxiii. 21.) Again, he is called *God's presence,* Exod. xxxiii. 14. an expression parallel to that of the text. So Deut. iv. 37. we read, *God chose their seed after them, and brought thee out by his presence;* for so the Hebrew *bepanau* plainly signifies: but our translators have made no sense at all of the place, by rendering it, *and brought thee out in his sight.* God, to shew his anger for the sin of the golden calf, threatens the people, that he would not lead them himself, but only send his angel with them, (Exod. xxxiii. 2, 3.) At this the people were much disheartened; (ver. 4.) and Moses earnestly intercedes with God, that the Divine presence might still accompany them; (ver. 15.) *i. e.* that God would continue to go before them in the pillar of cloud and of fire. According to this interpretation, St. Paul saith, that the *Jews tempted Christ in the wilderness,* (1 Cor. x. 9.) meaning the Logos, who, after his assuming human nature, was Christ. When the tabernacle was set up, this Schechinah, or token of God's presence, took up his residence over the ark, (Numb. vii. 89.) and the cloud covered the top of the tabernacle, (Exod. xl. 34. 38.) And then the Lord is said *to come down in the pillar of cloud,* (Numb. xii. 5.) and solemn adoration is paid to him, when this symbol of the Divine presence appeared, (Exod. xxxiii. 10. Numb. xvi. 19. 22.) All these circumstances laid together, prove that the person, who led the people through the wilderness, could be no created being, though he is sometimes called an *angel,* because he took upon him the office and ministry of angels, as he afterward took upon him the *form of a servant.* But in the text he is styled, in a distinguished manner, the *angel of God's presence,* and in Malachi, the *angel of the covenant;* (Mal. iii. 1.) for so the words should be translated.

And he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.] See the note on xlvi. 3.

Ver. 10. *But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.*] God's Spirit *strove with* the men that lived before the flood; (Gen. vi. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 19.) the same good Spirit directed Moses and the elders that had the government of the Jews in the wilderness. (See the following verse here, Numb. xi. 17. and Nehem. ix. 20.) Therefore, the people's frequent murmurings and rebellions were not so much against them, *as against the Lord,* as Moses truly upbraids them, Exod. xvi. 8.

Ver. 11. *Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people,* &c.] God is represented by an elegant figure, as recollecting with himself what he had done for his people, and using that as a motive why he should still own and defend them. The same argument is urged by Moses, Exod. xxxii. 11, 12. Numb. xiv. 13, 14, &c. or the word *he* may be understood of Israel, as remembering God's peculiar providence to their fathers, and then expostulating with him under their long captivity, in the following words, (ver. 15, &c.)

With the shepherd of his flock.] Or, *With the shepherds of his flock,* as the margin reads, *i. e.* Moses and Aaron. (See Psal. lxxvii. 5. 20.)

Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him?] That gave his Spirit to Moses and the seventy elders, to direct them in the government of his people: (see Numb. xi. 17. Nehem. ix. 20.) and afterward sent them prophets to lead and instruct them. (Compare Hag. ii. 5.)

Ver. 13. *That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?*] As a horse goes or carries a man upon plain ground without tripping. The *wilderness* sometimes signifies the plain, or champaigne country, and is opposed to the mountains. (See Jer. ix. 10. Lam. iv. 19. Joel i. 19.)

Ver. 14. *As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest.*] As a beast goest down to his pasture; or as a camel or such-like beast of burden travels through a champaigne country; so the Spirit of the Lord conducted the people of Israel into the promised land of rest and security. (See Deut. xii. 9.) The verb *ijarad* signifies simply *to go,* or *go forward,* as well as to *go down.* (See Gen. xliii. 5. 1 Sam. xxix. 4. xxx. 15, 16. 2 Kings ii. 2.)

Ver. 15. *Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies towards me?*] Where is thy love and thy concern for thy people, (see ver. 5.) and the power thou usedst to exert for their deliverance? Where is the yearning of thy bowels, *i. e.* thy tender compassions and mercies which thou formerly shewedst towards me, and which the holy writers compare to the affection a mother bears to her children? (See xlix. 15. Jer. xxxi. 20. Hos. xi. 8.)

Ver. 16. *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.*] Our only hope is in the relation we have to thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to call thyself our father. (See Deut. xxxii. 6. 1 Chron. xxix. 10. Mal. i. 6. ii. 10. John viii. 39. 41.) For it is in vain to boast ourselves that we are children of Abraham or Jacob; they neither know our condition, nor, if they did, can they afford us any relief.

Thy name is from everlasting.] See the note upon ver. 19.

Ver. 17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways.*] The words might better have been rendered, *Why hast thou suffered us to err from thy ways?* For the form called *hiphil,* in Hebrew, often denotes only permission, and is rendered elsewhere to that sense by our translators: so Psal. cxix. 10. *O let me not wander* [or go wrong] *from thy commandments:* where the verb is in *hiphil;* and again, Prov. x. 3. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish;* where the verb is in the same form. Thus we are to understand the same kind of expression, Psal. cxli. 4. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing:* so our new translation renders the verb; but the old one translates it much better: *O let not my heart be inclined to any evil thing.* In the same sense that expression of Jeremiah is to be understood, (iv. 10.) *Thou hast greatly deceived this people, i. e.* suffered them to be deceived by false prophets. To the same sense many interpreters understand those words of Ezekiel, (xiv. 9.) *I the Lord have deceived that prophet.* And in general we may observe, that the Scripture commonly speaks of what is permitted by Providence, as if it were directed by it. To give but one instance out of many: God is said to *move David to number the people:* (2 Sam. xxiv. 1.) whereas it appears, by comparing the text with 1 Chron. xxi. he only permitted Satan to move him to it.

And hardened our heart from thy fear?] See vi. 10.

Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.] As God is said to absent himself, when he disregards the prayers of his people; (see Psal. lxxiv. 1.) so he is said to return to them, when he answers their requests with seasonable relief. (See Zech. i. 3. Mal. iii. 7.) Or

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the words may be thus translated, *Turn, for thy servants, the tribes of thine inheritance: i. e.* turn their captivity for the sake of thy servants Abraham and Israel, (ver. 16.) to whom thou madest the promises.

Ver. 18. *The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.*] *i. e.* Have possessed *thine inheritance*, mentioned ver. 17. The prophet calls it *a little while*, in comparison of God's promise, which, as the Jews commonly understood it, gave them the possession of Canaan for ever. (See Gen. xvii. 8.) But some translate the whole verse thus, *Our adversaries have possessed thy holy people as a thing of nought, they have trodden down thy sanctuary.* If we understand this of the devastations made by the Romans, under Titus, and by the Mahometans since, the phrase is exactly parallel to the words of Christ, (Luke xxi. 24.) *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles.*

Ver. 19. *We are thine; thou never barest rule over them:* &c.] The words might better be rendered, *We are thine of old, thou hast not ruled over them*, &c. *Menolam, of old*, is used in the same sense, ver. 16. where our English reads, *Thy name is from everlasting;* the sense is, Thy name is called upon us, so the Septuagint understand it; or, Thou art called the God of Abraham, or of Israel, from ancient times; and therefore we humbly beg thee not to cast us off utterly, whilst thou makest thyself known to the gentiles, who, till of late never were thy people, nor in covenant with thee. (See lxvi. 1.) The word *thine* is not in the Hebrew; so some render the verse thus, *We have been for a great while* [as] *those over whom thou didst not bear rule, nor were we called by thy name.* Thou hast rejected us altogether, and dost disregard us, as if we had never had any relation to thee, nor ever were called thy people: which sense agrees very well with the present condition of the Jewish nation, which hath continued for many ages without king, or prince, or sacrifice, as the prophet Hosea foretold, iii. 4.

CHAP. LXIV.

See the Argument of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 1. *Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down.*] The prayer, begun lxiii. 15. is continued throughout this chapter, in the name of the church and people of the Jews, as languishing and disconsolate under the long rejection they at present suffer; and the chapter begins with an earnest wish that God would shew himself as visibly in favour of his ancient people, as he did when he came down upon Mount Sinai, when thunder, and lightning, and tempests, that shook heaven and earth, did testify his presence. (See Exod. xix. 16. 18.)

That the mountains might flow down at thy presence.] A poetical description of the thunder and lightning which shook Mount Sinai, and the violent rains which accompanied this tempest, and made the mountains look as if they were melted down. (Compare Judg. v. 5. Psal. lxviii. 8. Micah i. 4.) God's appearance is commonly represented in Scripture, as accompanied with thunders and tempests, in allusion to his descent upon Mount Sinai. (See Psal. xviii. 7, 8, &c. Micah i. 3, 4. Habak. iv. 5, 6. 10.)

Ver. 2. *As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil.*] The sense would be plainer if a supplement were made between the two parts of this sentence, thus, *As when the melting fire* [or, the fire of the founder] *burneth*, [and as] *the fire causeth the waters to boil:* the prophet compares this *flowing down of the mountains* to the melting of metals by the force of a vehement fire, and to the boiling over of water when it is heated.

Ver. 3. *When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down*, &c.] Such terrible instances of thy power thou shewedst to our forefathers: (see Exod. xxxiv. 10.) who are here spoken of in the first person, as being of one blood with their posterity. But I think the words will bear another interpretation, which agrees better with what follows, *When thou shalt do terrible and unexpected things; when thou shalt come down* (and visibly interpose for the deliverance of thy people), *the mountains shall melt at thy presence.* And then follows very appositely in the next verse,

Ver. 4. *For since the beginning of the world men have not heard*, &c.] The methods of thy dispensations, whereby thou wilt fulfil thy promises made to thy people, are beyond any thing we can think or conceive.

Ver. 5. *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness; those that remember thee in thy ways.*] Thou preventest with the blessings of thy goodness, those that take pleasure in the ways of thy commandments, and live under a continual sense of thy providence.

Behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.] We have been guilty of great offences, whereby we have provoked thine anger, but thy mercies endure for ever, and thy gracious promises are still the same; and this encourages us still to trust in thy goodness. (Compare Mal. iii. 6.) The pronoun [*those*] refers to God's *ways*, by which we may understand, not only his laws, but likewise the dispensations of his providence. (Compare lv. 9. Exod. xxxiii. 13. Psal. ciii. 7.) But the latter part of the verse may thus be translated, *Behold, thou art wroth; because we have sinned continually against those* (ways), *and shall we be saved?*

Ver. 6. *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*] The best actions of the best men have a great alloy of imperfection. When the Hebrew language would express the most excellent in its kind, it makes use of the plural number: thus *wisdoms* signifies the most excellent, or Divine wisdom, Prov. i. 20. ix. 1. So here *righteousnesses* is the most perfect righteousness men can attain to.

And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.] Like a wind that blasts and withers both leaves and fruit. (Compare Jer. iv. 11. Hos. xiii. 15.)

Ver. 7. *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.*] There is nobody layeth our calamities to heart, so as to raise his mind into a devout posture, and to make God his refuge in his adversity. (Compare xxvii. 5.) Or, there is none that try to avert God's judgments by their intercessions, which is compared here to the laying hold of a man's hand when he is just going to strike.

For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.] The particle *ki* should be translated *therefore*, as it is Psal. cxvi. 10. where the English translation rightly renders the sense, *I believed, and therefore have I spoken.* And thus the Greek particle ὅτι may

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most fitly be translated, Luke vii. 47. *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; therefore she loved much:* which sense agrees best with the design of the foregoing parable.

Ver. 10. *Thy holy cities are a wilderness.*] By *holy cities,* in the plural number, may be meant Zion, (which was properly called the *city of David:* see 2 Sam. v. 9.) and Jerusalem, as they are sometimes divided into the upper and lower city. And grammarians observe, that the word Jerusalem is in the *dual* number in the Hebrew, because it was divided into the upper and lower city.

Ver. 11. *Our holy and our beautiful house, wherein our fathers praised thee, is burnt with fire.*] This relates to the burning of the temple by the Romans, who made an entire destruction of it, according to our Saviour's prediction, (Matt. xxiv. 2.)

And all our pleasant things are laid waste.] Judea is called the *pleasant land,* Dan. viii. 9. and the *glory of all lands,* Ezek. xx. 6. but the Romans utterly laid it waste, partly in Vespasian's time, and partly in Adrian's; but the words chiefly relate to the temple, whose glory and beauty was laid waste, and which the Jews valued themselves upon above all things. (See Ezek. xxiv. 21. 25.)

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?*] Wilt thou neither shew thy compassion towards thy servants, nor thy resentments to thine enemies? (Compare xlii. 14. lxv. 6.)

CHAP. LXV.

ARGUMENT.

In the beginning of this chapter, God answers the foregoing complaints of the Jews concerning their dereliction, and tells them that they rejected the preaching both of Christ and his apostles, whereas the gentiles readily complied with it. He then rebukes them for their incredulity, idolatry, and hypocrisy; but promises mercy to those that repent, and gives a description of that new Jerusalem state, which should commence from their restoration.

Ver. 1. *I AM sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.*] There is a manifest impropriety in the expression of the first part of the sentence; so the words should rather be rendered, *I am found of them that asked not for me:* the verb, which commonly signifies to *seek,* being by a metonymy put for *finding.* (Compare Eccles. iii. 6.) Or the words may be translated thus, *I am preached to them that asked not for me:* for the verb *darash* signifies to *teach* or *instruct:* in which sense it is used Psal. cxi. 2. where our translation reads, *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein;* but the sense is, *known,* or *learned by those that have pleasure therein.* And the word *midrasch,* derived from this verb, signifies a *commentary* or *exposition.*

I said, Behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name.] I made myself manifest (compare xli. 27.) to those that were not in covenant with me, *i. e.* to the gentiles. (See lxiii. 19.)

Ver. 2. *I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.*] But I did not make myself known to the gentiles, till you Jews had rejected me, after I had used all the arts of persuasion and entreaty to you, in order to your conversion. *To spread out the hand,* is a gesture of begging or importunity. (See i. 15. Jer. iv. 31. Lam. i. 17.) St. Paul expounds these two verses of the calling of the gentiles, after that the Jews had rejected the gracious counsel of God against themselves, (Rom. x. 20, 21.)

Ver. 3. *A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face.*] The reigning sins of the Jews are reckoned up in this and the two following verses: and those are of two sorts, 1. Their ancient idolatry, the *iniquities of their fathers,* (ver. 7.) which the prophet describes as it was practised in his days. 2. Their spiritual pride and hypocrisy, (ver. 5.) which exactly answers the temper of the Jewish nation in the time of our Saviour.

That sacrificeth in gardens.] In groves or shady places. (See the note on i. 29.) Dr. Spencer understands the words of those sacrifices which were offered in gardens and orchards, in order to procure plenty of fruit. (See the notes upon the last sentence of the following verse.)

And burneth incense upon altars of brick.] God commanded that his altar should be built of whole stones, neither hewn, nor polished; (Exod. xx. 25. Deut. xxvii. 5.) in opposition, as it is probable, to the heathen altars, which were more artificially contrived.

Ver. 4. *Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments.*] As those did who practised necromancy, and consulted with infernal spirits. (See Deut. xviii. 11.) It was a common custom too among the heathens, for persons to lodge all night in the temples of their idols, particularly in that of Æsculapius, which were no better than monuments of the dead, in order to obtain such dreams as might be beneficial to them. [See the Answer to Fontanelle's Hist. of Oracles, p. 140.] By the word *netzarim,* which our translation renders *monuments,* Dr. Spencer (lib. iii. de Legib. Hebr. dissert. viii. cap. 3.) understands solitary places, in which sense some take the word, xlix. 6. Such places being haunted by evil spirits, according to the opinion of the vulgar. (See the note on xiii. 21.)

Which eat swine's flesh.] This was expressly forbidden in the law, (Lev. xi. 7.) and the eating of it was a sort of religious ceremony, whereby apostates made a solemn renunciation of the Jewish religion. (See 2 Maccab. vi. 18. vii. 1.) One reason why the religious Jews so much abhorred the eating swine's flesh probably was, because the eating it was a solemn rite of lustration among the Egyptian priests, who, at the full moon, offered part of it in sacrifice, and eat part of it themselves, though at other times they abhorred to touch it. (See Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 47.) Plato likewise acquaints us, that the sacrifice of a hog was a usual rite of initiation at the heathen mysteries, (de Repub. lib. ii.) This passage is quoted by Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. xiii. where Vigerius in his notes shews, that the sacrificing swine's flesh was used in the mysteries of Bacchus and Ceres: and Varro (lib. ii. de Re Rust.) derives *ὗς* from *θύειν,* because it was one of the principal of the heathen sacrifices.

And broth of abominable things is in their vessels.] This denotes the superstitious practice of *seething a kid in its mother's milk,* with which they sprinkled the trees in their fields and gardens (see ver. 3.) to make them more fruitful; upon which account it is more than once forbidden in the

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law. (See Exod. xxiii. 19. xxxiv. 26. Deut. xiv. 21.) The Romans learned this superstition from the Egyptians probably, and worshipped Pales, or Ceres, with milk. So Ovid. Fastor. lib. iv.

"Sylvicolam tepido lacte precare Palem."

Mr. White makes an objection against applying these passages to the modern Jews, because since Christ's time they have not been guilty of any of these kinds of idolatry, and consequently these sins cannot be assigned as a cause of their rejection. To which it may be answered, 1. That the prophet here objects to them the sins of their forefathers, as well as their own: see ver. 7. and Deut. xxxii. 21. where their rejection is ascribed to their idolatries; according to the tenor of God's covenant, whereby he hath threatened to *visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.* 2. The prophet, indeed, mentions only such idolatries as were practised in and about his own time; but yet may comprehend under those heads all other kinds of that sin; just as the idolatries practised by some Christians, are called the doctrines of Balaam and Jezebel, Rev. ii. 14. 20. and the church where they were practised, is described by the name of Sodom and Egypt, xi. 8. And the Jews at this day acknowledge the compliances of several of their nation with the idolatries practised in those popish countries where the inquisition is set up, as one of their national sins. (See Limborch's Amica Collatio cum Judæo.)

Ver. 5. *Which say, Stand by thyself—for I am holier than thou.*] Or, *I esteem thee as unclean:* so some render the verb *kedashtika;* which hath two contrary significations, both to *make holy,* and to *pollute,* a thing usual in that language: (See the note upon xxii. 17, 18.) This description of a proud hypocrite, exactly agrees with the temper of the scribes and pharisees in Christ's time. (See Matt. ix. 11. Mark vii. 4. John xviii. 28.)

These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.] These are as offensive to me as smoke is to the nose, they are a perpetual provocation to me, and kindle my anger continually against them.

Ver. 6. *Behold, it is written before me.*] God's irrevocable purposes are often expressed as so many decrees entered into a register. (See the note upon xxxiv. 16.)

I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom.] I will not restrain my anger any longer, (see xlii. 14.) but recompense their sins double upon them. (See Jer. xvi. 18. and the notes upon xl. 2.)

Ver. 7. *Which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills.*] See lvii. 7. Ezek. xviii. 6. xx. 27, 28.

Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom.] The iniquities of their forefathers, aggravated by the addition of their own. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 32. 35, 36. and see the note upon ver. 4.)

Ver. 8. *As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not,* &c.] As a few good grapes are found among a cluster of bad ones, and one speaks to another that would pluck it from the tree to spare it, because some of the grapes may come to good: so I will not destroy the whole nation, for the sake of the few good persons which spring out from among the rest. Those are called the *remnant* by St. Paul, Rom. ix. 27. xi. 5. where he alludes to i. 9. vi. 13. vii. 3. x. 21. of this prophecy.

Ver. 9. *And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains.*] Out of this stock shall arise a better generation, who shall repossess the inheritance of their ancestors. Judea being a hilly country, is elsewhere expressed by the *mountains* of Israel. (See xiv. 25. Ezek. xxxvi. 1.)

And mine elect shall inherit it.] These are called the *election* by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 7.

Ver. 10. *And Sharon shall be a fold for flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in.*] The blessings of the gospel are sometimes represented under the emblems of temporal happiness. (See the note upon iv. 2.) But if we take the words in their literal sense, they denote the great plenty and security these elect should enjoy. (Compare xxx. 23.) Sharon was one of the richest parts of Judea: (see xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2.) and so was the valley of Achor, which was remarkable for being the first tract of ground the Israelites took possession of, after their entrance into the promised land: and therefore is called a *door of hope* by Hosea, (ii. 15.) because it gave them first footing in that country, and encouraged them to hope that they should become masters of the whole.

Ver. 11. *But ye are they that forget the Lord, that forget my holy mountain.*] The prophet now directs his discourse to the sinners and idolaters, whom he had reproved and threatened, ver. 2, 3, &c. By *my holy mountain* is meant God's temple and worship, a figure of the Christian church. (See the note on ii. 2.)

That prepare a table for that troop.] It was customary both among the Jews and gentiles, after some part of the sacrifice had been offered upon the altar, to make a feast of the remainder. (See lvii. 7. Ezek. xxiii. 41.) This is called the *table of devils,* to whom the gentiles sacrificed, 1 Cor. x. 21. It is a great dispute among the critics what idol *Gad* was, which several interpreters here translate *Troop,* as if it were some heavenly constellation. But the word likewise signifies *Fortune,* or good luck, and so it is translated by the Septuagint, Gen. xxx. 11. and in this place too; for it appears from St. Jerome's commentary upon this verse, that the Greek copies in his times read, Ἑτοιμάζοντες τῇ τύχῃ τράπεζαν, καὶ πληροῦντες, τῷ Δαιμονίῳ κέρασμα.

And that furnish a drink-offering to that number.] Or, *to Meni,* which is the word in the Hebrew: by which some understand the sun. (See Huetius in Comment. on Origen, p. 109, 110. and Menagius upon Laertius, lib. viii. n. 34.) Bochart, and Dr. Spencer (de Legib. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 2.) take it to signify a *hero,* worshipped by the Egyptians: Dr. Pocock (Not. ad Specim. Histor. Arab. p. 92.) understands by it an idol of the Arabians, and others an idol of the Armenians; Minni being a province in Armenia. (See Jer. li. 27.)

[By *Gad* and *Meni,* Huetius understands the moon and the sun: *fortune* being under the influence of the former, and the *genius* which the heathens allotted to every man under the direction of the sun. See Huetiana, n. 120. and his second epistle to Bochart, published by Tilladot.]

Ver. 12. *Therefore will I number you to the sword.*] An allusion to the etymology of the word *Meni,* which is derived from the verb *manah,* which signifies to *number;* such paronomasias are frequent in the prophets. (See the note upon lxiii. 1.) If we understand this place of the

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final restoration of the Jews, as the series of the prophecy directs, then this and the following verses are to be explained of that discrimination which God will make between the obedient and disobedient among that people, bringing back the former into their own country, and punishing the latter with utter destruction, as he did the rebels in the wilderness. (Compare xxvii. 12. Ezek. xi. 17. 21. xx. 34. 38. Amos ix. 8, 9.)

When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear.] I have given frequent calls to you by my servants the prophets, and the apostles, and even by my Son, and yet ye refused to hearken. (Compare Matt. xxi. 34. 43.)

And did choose the thing wherein I delighted not.] *i. e.* Which I extremely abhorred: we meet with the same kind of expression, Jer. vii. 31. where God, reproving them for sacrificing their children to Moloch, saith, *I commanded it not, i. e.* I expressly forbade it. This figure is called *Meiôsis* by the rhetoricians, where a great deal more is understood than is expressed.

Ver. 13, 14. *Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry,* &c.] God will make a great difference between his faithful servants and such unbelievers as you are. They shall have their losses and wants plentifully made up to them; whereas you that have so long abused the means of grace, shall be wholly deprived of it. This is expressed in Christ's parables, by being *shut out of the kingdom of heaven,* excluded from the *marriage feast,* and *cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (See Matt. viii. 11, 12. Luke xiii. 24, 25, &c. xiv. 23, 24.)

Ver. 15. *And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen.*] Mine elect (see ver. 9. 22.) shall look upon you as a standing monument of God's indignation, and shall use this as a common form of imprecation, *God do so to me as he has done to the wicked Jews:* (compare Jer. xxix. 22.) *Of them shall they take up a curse,* saith the prophet there, *saying, God make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab.* (See likewise Zech. viii. 12.)

For the Lord God shall slay thee.] See ver. 12. and lxvi. 16.

And call his servants by another name.] See the note on lxii. 2. This may mean changing the name of Jew into that of Christian.

Ver. 16. *That he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself by the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.*] Or, *He who blesseth himself,* &c. For this may be reckoned a new sentence, that hath no dependance upon what went before, and it implies the utter abolishing of idolatry, that all religious invocation, whether of prayer, swearing, or the like, should be performed in the name of God, and of him alone. The total extirpation of idolatry is a blessing reserved for the last times. (See the note on i. 29.) By the *earth* we may mean here the gentiles, who are often styled κόσμος, *the world,* in the New Testament.

[*The God of truth.*] The Hebrew reads *Amen;* so the expression may properly be understood of Christ, who is the *true God,* (1 John v. 20.) and called *Amen,* or the truth, Rev. iii. 14. probably in allusion to this place: (compare 2 Cor. i. 20.) and the words import, that all spiritual blessings shall be derived from him.]

For the former troubles are forgotten.] Or, *When the former troubles,* &c. The *new heavens,* and *new earth,* mentioned in the following verse, are not subject to any of those errors and miseries, to which the present state of the world is obnoxious. (See ver. 19. and Rev. xxi. 3, 4. &c.)

Ver. 17. *For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth.*] The conversion of the Jews will be in the last times of this world: (see Hos. iii. 5.) and then will follow the *new heavens and earth,* which are to commence after the dissolution of this world. (See 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1.) Such a new state of things, St. Peter tells us, we are to expect *according to God's promise,* which must relate to some prophecies of the Old Testament, and particularly to this and the following chapter, both the apostles using the very same expressions which are found here.

And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.] The glory of the *new heavens and earth,* shall so far surpass the happiest days that ever were seen in former times, that they shall not deserve to be mentioned, there being no comparison between them. (Compare Jer. iii. 16.)

Ver. 18. *For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*] This may be best expounded of the New Jerusalem, which shall *come down from God,* when the new heavens and new earth are created; see Rev. xxi. 1, 2. and compare lxvi. 22. where *there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain,* (ibid. ver. 4. and the following verse here.) Though some learned men suppose, that upon the restoration of the Jews there may be some particular privileges belonging to the earthly Jerusalem, as the metropolis of that nation. (See the note upon lxvi. 20.) But we must not be too positive as to any particular description of these distant events.

[*Rejoice for ever in that which I create.*] The learned Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, in his Defence of Christianity, chap. 2. sect. 2. translates the words, *Rejoice for the age to come, which I create.* The *age to come* was a known expression among the Jews for the times of the Messias. See the note upon ix. 6. in which text the same learned writer understands the phrase *Ab Ed,* to the same sense, translated in our English, *everlasting Father.*]

Ver. 20. *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, or an old man that hath not filled up his days.*] *From thence,* or *from that time,* (see note on xlviii. 16.) there shall be no untimely deaths, either of infants who are abortive, or never grow up to man's estate; or of old men who do not live out the full term of life.

For the child should die a hundred years old; but the sinner, being a hundred years old, shall be accursed.] The sense would be plainer, if the words were translated thus: *For he that dies a hundred years old, shall die a child:* and the *sinner that dies a hundred years old, shall be accursed.* The prophet describes this renovation of the world as a paradisiacal state, and such as the patriarchs enjoyed before the flood, when men commonly lived near a thousand years. So he that died at a hundred years of age would have been looked upon as dying in the age of childhood, and be judged to have been cut off in the beginning of his years, as a punishment for some great sins he had committed. Hesiod describes what he calls the *silver age* of the world, in much the same expressions, Ἔργ. καὶ Ἡμ. lib. i. ver. 129.—

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Ἀλλ' ἑκατὸν μὲν παῖς ἔτεα παρὰ μητέρι κεδνῇ
Ἐτρέφετ' ἀτάλλων, μέγα νήπιος———

A boy of a hundred years old played about with his mother, an overgrown child.

The words of the text seem to imply, that the millenian state shall not be free from all manner of sin, though there shall be no place there for idolatry and apostacy. Accordingly some learned men suppose, that the *lukewarm* Laodicean state of the church, which is described, and reproved, Rev. iii. 14, &c. is to be contemporary with some part of the millenium.

Ver. 21. *They shall build houses, and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*] A blessing promised to the Jews upon their conversion, in contradiction to that curse which Moses denounced against them for their disobedience; (Deut. xxviii. 30.) and it implies both security from the invasion of enemies, and from untimely death. (Compare lxvi. 8.)

Ver. 22. *For as the days of a tree are the days of my people.*] Not like the fading of a leaf, to which our present mortal state is often compared. The Septuagint translate it, *As the days of the tree of life, shall be the days of my people*, expressing the sense and import of the words.

Ver. 23. *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble.*] As those do who enjoy not the fruits of their labour. (See ver. 21, 22.)

Ver. 24. *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer.*] God will prevent them with his blessings, and gratify their desires before they ask: a sure token of his favour and love towards them, as his rejecting men, and casting them off, is expressed by his *hiding away his face from them*, and refusing to hear their prayers. (See Prov. i. 28. Isa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12. Lam. iii. 8. 44.)

Ver. 25. *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together*, &c.] Concerning the metaphorical sense of these expressions, see the notes upon xi. 6. xxxv. 9. But since the renovation here spoken of extends to the whole creation, (see Rom. viii. 21.) they may imply the correcting the noxious qualities of fierce or venomous creatures.

[*And dust shall be the serpent's meat.*] The curse pronounced upon the serpent, Gen. iii. 14. shall then be fully accomplished: Christ having *put all enemies under his feet*, and especially the devil, who is the head of them. See Micah vii. 17. Rom. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 27.]

CHAP. LXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In the beginning of the chapter God answers the complaints of the Jews concerning the destruction of the temple, which they so passionately bewail, lxiii. 18. lxiv. 11. and instructs them in the evangelical way of worshipping God *in spirit and in truth*, and not by sacrifices, or a carnal worship. He then assigns the causes of his rejecting the Jews, and calling the gentiles, but promises in due time to unite them into one glorious and flourishing church.

Ver. 1. *THE heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*] A temple in the Jewish notion was God's place of residence, or his habitation, where he resided as a king in a palace: accordingly the *cherubims* were his throne, the *ark* was his footstool, the *priests* were his immediate attendants, and the *shew-bread and sacrifices* were the provision for his table. Such a notion of a temple was common both to Jews and gentiles; [only with this difference, that the gentiles thought the setting up an image a necessary part of the dedication of a temple, to secure, as they imagined, the presence of the deity to whom it was dedicated. *Templi nulla ratio, quod non coronat simulacrum*, saith Isidore.] Such a notion seems to confine God's presence to a certain place, and therefore was not so suitable to the greatness of the Divine majesty. It is under this acceptation of the word, that God reproves the Jews for laying such stress upon their temple-worship, and comforts them under the loss of it, which they speak of with so much concern, lxiv. 11. And it is under the same notion that the Christian apologists join temples with images, and profess that their religion allows of neither.

Ver. 2. *For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord.*] I fill heaven and earth, which are the works of my hands, and are still sustained and supported by me. *All those things are mine*; so the Septuagint translate the latter part of the sentence.

But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, &c.] Such a one is a living temple of God. (See lvii. 15.)

Ver. 3. *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man.*] Without this devout temper of mind, killing an ox for a burnt-offering is no more acceptable to God, than if a man offered his son in sacrifice to Moloch.

He that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck.] The price of a dog was forbid to be brought into the house of the Lord, by way of vow, or free-will-offering. (See Deut. xxiii. 18.)

He that offereth an oblation, is as if he offered swine's blood.] Which being one of the principal sacrifices among the gentiles, was in a particular manner abominable to God. (See the notes upon lxv. 4.)

He that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.] Or, *maketh a memorial with incense*, as the margin reads. The verb *zachar, to commemorate*, signifies any act of Divine worship. (See the note upon lvii. 8.)

Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.] Compare lxv. 12. This may relate to their idolatrous practices, mentioned lxv. 3, 4. 11. and ver. 17. of this chapter. Or their very ceremonious worship may be reproved in these terms, because, since the revelation of the gospel, God had rejected it, and declared it to be a plain contradiction to his will, and an affront to his authority.

Ver. 4. *I will also choose their delusions.*] I will punish them in their own way, and set over them the scribes and pharisees, who shall govern them by their traditions instead of the word of God; or I will suffer *false Christs* and *false prophets* to deceive them. (See Matt. xxiv. 24. John v. 43.)

And I will bring their fears upon them.] This was exactly fulfilled, when they crucified Christ for fear of the Romans, (John xi. 48.) which very sin was punished by an utter destruction from that very people.

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Because when I called, none did answer, &c.] See lxv. 12.

Ver. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake,* &c.] Hearken to this, you Jews, that embraced the gospel upon the preaching of Christ and the apostles: Your brethren have hated you for my sake, and cast you out of their synagogues, (compare Luke vi. 22.) and in derision called upon God to do some extraordinary thing in your behalf: but God's providence at the destruction of Jerusalem shall interpose visibly for your deliverance, and leave them to perish in their city. This was remarkably verified when the Christians had a Divine warning to leave the city, and thereupon retired to Pella, and escaped the common destruction. (See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. cap. 5. Epiph. Hæres. xxx.)

Ver. 6. *A voice from the city, a voice from the temple,* &c.] The prophet seems to hear the noise of the ruin of the city and temple sounding in his ears: *The voice from the city* may fitly be expounded of that story which Josephus relates, (de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 12.) concerning one Jesus the son of Anani, who, for a considerable time before the war began, or the city was besieged, went about the streets, crying, *Woe, woe, unto Jerusalem!* and neither threatenings nor stripes could prevail with him to be silent. And the *voice from the temple* was verified in that voice, which, Josephus tells us in the same chapter, was heard in the temple a little before the final destruction of it, saying, *Let us depart hence.*

Ver. 7. *Before she travailed, she brought forth.*] Here begins a new paragraph, containing a description of the sudden increase of the Christian church, upon God's rejecting the Jews, and destroying their temple and worship. The very destruction of the Jewish polity making way for the growth of the gospel, inasmuch as it abated that opposition which the Jewish zealots all along gave to the spreading of it; and the abolishing the Jewish worship contributed very much to the abrogating the law of Moses, and burying it with silence and decency. (See Rom. xi. 11.) The church is described here as a travailing woman, the mother of all true believers. (See liv. 1. Gal. iv. 26.)

Before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.] The expressions import how suddenly and quickly Christianity was spread and propagated over the world. And this latter sentence alludes to the Hebrew women being delivered of their male children, before the midwives could come to them, (Exod. i. 19.) The propagating the kingdom of Christ, is, in like manner, described by a woman's travailing, and bringing forth a man-child, Rev. xii. 1, 2. 5. which place plainly alludes to the words here.

Ver. 8. *Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?*] The suddenness of this event is as surprising, as if the fruits of the earth, which are brought to perfection by slow degrees, should blossom and ripen all in one day. And the fruitfulness of this spiritual increase is as wonderful, as if a whole nation were born at once, or by one woman. We may understand the former part of this sentence of the speedy propagation of the gospel through the world, and the latter part of it of the sudden conversion of the Jews, and their union with the gentiles into one church, when God *will remove the iniquity of the land in one day,* as it is foretold, Zech. iii. 9. (Compare Micah v. 3.) These two events, though distant in time, yet will agree very much in the swiftness of their progress.

For as soon as Zion travailed, she was delivered of her children.] Without pain or difficulty, no ill accident interposing to hinder their birth: as it follows,

Ver. 9. *Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?* &c.] Shall I disappoint a work, of which I myself was the author, when every thing is ripe for execution, and the effect just ready to be produced? (Compare xxxvii. 3.) The prophet still carries on the comparison between the natural and spiritual birth. (Compare Gal. iv. 19.)

Ver. 10. *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem—all ye that love her.*] Let all that wish her well congratulate her for the favours God hath shewed to her, and particularly let the gentiles rejoice with the Jewish church; (see Deut. xxxii. 43.) for her advancement shall redound to their benefit. (See ver. 12.)

Rejoice with her, all ye that mourn for her.] See the note on lvii. 18.

Ver. 11. *That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations.*] Or, *Because ye shall suck,* &c. She will nourish the faithful with her doctrine, as a tender mother does her children with her breasts. The prophet persists in comparing the church to a child-bearing woman.

And be delighted with the abundance of her glory.] You shall share in the glory God hath conferred upon the Jewish church, and shall be edified by the gifts and graces that God will plentifully bestow upon her. (See below, ver. 19. and Rom. xi. 12.)

Ver. 12. *For I will extend peace to her like a river.*] All manner of prosperity. (Compare xlviii. 18. lx. 5.)

And the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream.] The riches of the gentiles shall flow in upon you, by their liberality and charity: (see lxi. 6.) or, I will impart to her all that grace and knowledge, for which the church of the gentiles value themselves: St. Paul says, (Rom. xi. 11.) that the *Jews will be provoked to emulation* by the gentile believers, by their coming into the church in great numbers, and the Jews seeing them favoured with all the privileges of God's people and themselves utterly rejected; and that this will be a principal means of working their conversion. And when they are converted, they will be extraordinary instruments in God's hands, for the converting the remainder of the heathen world. (See ver. 19. compared with lx. 4, 5. and Rom. xi. 12. 15. 25. 31.)

Ye shall be borne upon her sides, &c.] Compare lx. 4. and see the note on ver. 11. of this chapter.

Ver. 14. *And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.*] You Jews shall recover your ancient strength and beauty, and be renewed in as wonderful a manner, as if dry withered bones should recover their youth and moisture: or, as if the dead bones in a charnel-house should have life and vigour infused into them: (compare Ecclus. xlvi. 12. xlix. 10.) then will be fulfilled that *resurrection of the dry bones,* spoken of by Ezekiel, xxxvii. 1, &c. for that vision relates to the restoration of the Jewish nation, after it had lain for many ages in a dead, hopeless condition. In like manner, St. Paul calls the receiving the Jews into the church, *Life from the dead,* Rom. xi. 15.

And the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies.] Then shall

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the kingdom or power of the Messias be manifested in a distinguishing protection of his people, and destruction of his and their enemies.

Ver. 15. *For, behold, the Lord will come with fire.*] God is called a *consuming fire*, Deut. iv. 24. and his vengeance often resembled to fire, which consumes every thing in an instant. (See ix. 5. xxx. 30. see the following verse.)

And with his chariots like a whirlwind.] An allusion to the old way of fighting with chariots. (Compare v. 28. xxi. 7. 9.) God is elsewhere described, as *making the clouds his chariot*, (Psal. civ. 3. Habak. iii. 8.) and as compassed about with tempests and darkness, (Psal. xviii. 10.)

Ver. 16. *For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh*, &c.] This seems to denote the discomfiture of Gog and Magog, who are to be destroyed by fire. See Ezek. xxxix. 6. 9. They are described in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of that prophecy, as coming in a great body against the land of Israel after the restoration of the Jews, and their return into their own land, and their receiving an utter overthrow. Or, this may be understood of the battle of Armageddon, (Rev. xvi. 14. xix. 19.) where the armies of Satan and antichrist are to be vanquished by the Lamb and his followers: or of the discomfiture of Satan's army, mentioned Rev. xx. 8, 9. which shall be destroyed by fire from heaven. The Scriptures do in general declare there shall be a great destruction of Christ's enemies here upon earth, before the general judgment, or consummation of all things: compare with the context here, chap. xxxiv. lxiii. 1. 6. Psal. cx. 5, 6. Jer. l. li. a great part of which chapters certainly relate to the latter times, Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix. Joel iii. 11. 14. Micah v. 8, &c. Zech. xii. 2, &c. xiv. 1. 13. Rev. xiv. 20. xvi. 14. xix. 19. But we must not be too positive in assigning the particular place, time, or manner, how these prophecies shall be fulfilled, because the events are secrets, whose causes lie hid as yet in the depths of Providence. And the very great obscurity of the prophecies, which are supposed to relate to these matters, is to me a convincing argument that they are not yet fulfilled.

Ver. 17. *They that sanctify, and purify themselves in gardens.*] Concerning *sacrificing in gardens*, see the note upon lxv. 3. But there were several sorts of lustrations or purifications used among the heathens, from whence the Jews learned their idolatrous customs: some of which were performed by washings, for which purpose they had fountains in their sacred groves and gardens.

Behind one tree in the midst.] Several critics agree, that by the Hebrew word *achad* is meant the *sun*, which, Macrobius saith, (Saturnal, lib. i. cap. 23.) was called by the Assyrians *adad*, a word which he tells us there signifies *one*, and therefore is probably derived from the Hebrew, *achad*. If we follow this interpretation, the words may be best translated thus: *Behind* [*the chapel*] (or shrine) *of the sun, in the midst* [of the garden].

Eating swine's flesh.] See the note upon lxv. 4.

And the abomination.] The same which is called *broth of abominable things*, lxv. 4. (See the note there.)

And the mouse.] The heathens used some sort of meats by way of purification, or lustration, and chiefly such as were not used in common food; such were several of those meats forbidden by the law, and called *abominable* by Moses: (Deut. xiv. 3.) of this kind probably was the *mouse*, which was expressly forbidden to be eaten, Lev. xi. 29. Jamblichus Syrus, in Photius, cod. 94. reckons mice among the several sorts of animals, by which the heathens practised magic or divination, and saith, that some derived the word Μυστήριον from Μῦς.

Concerning the reasons for applying these ancient idolatries to later times, see the notes upon lxv. 4. Maimonides observes, (More Nevochim, lib. iii. cap. 29. p. 424.) from the books of the Zabians, who were ancient idolaters, that they used *to offer to the sun*, the idol mentioned in this very verse, *seven bats* and *seven mice*, which he thinks was the reason why these creatures were reckoned *abominable* in the law of Moses, and forbidden to be eaten.

Ver. 18. *For I know their works, and their thoughts.*] The word *know* is not in the Hebrew: some supply the ellipsis thus, should *I* bear *their works?* &c. Such a kind of deficiency is supplied in that manner by our translators, Numb. xiv. 27.

I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall see my glory.] This may most probably be understood of the gathering of the Jews and gentiles into one church. (See the note upon liv. 7. and compare Rev. xiv. 6.)

Ver. 19. *And I will set a sign among them.*] A signal to gather the believing Jews together from their several dispersions. (See xi. 12. lxii. 10.) A *sign* (*ôth* in the Hebrew) is the same with an ensign, or standard, and so it is used, Psal. lxxiv. 4.

And I will send those that are escaped of them unto the nations.] The *escaped of Israel* are mentioned before: (iv. 2.) and mean those *that are escaped of the nations;* (xlv. 20.) *i. e.* who are returned home out of their several dispersions. Some of these, God saith he will send to be preachers and apostles to the unconverted gentiles, as St. Paul, when he was converted, was ordained to be an apostle of the gentiles; whose conversion, according to Mr. Mede, carries in it an earnest, and an emblem of the general conversion of that nation. (See his Works, p. 891.) Without question their conversion will be a signal instance of the power of God's grace, and a convincing argument to others of the truth of the gospel, as hath been observed upon ver. 12.

To Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, &c.] They shall go out and make conversions in all the parts of the world: *Tarshish* denotes the eastern parts; (see note upon xi. 16.) *Pul* and *Lud* the south; *Tubal* and *Javan* the north; and the *islands* the west.

Pul and Lud that draw the bow.] Some suppose *Pul* to be the same people who are elsewhere called by the name of *Phut*, which is usually joined with *Lud;* and is rendered *Lybia*, or the *Lybians*, by most interpreters. (See Jer. xlvi. 9. Ezek. xxvii. 10. xxx. 5.) But Bochart thinks *Pul* to be the same with *Phil*, or *Philis*, a city upon the river Nile; and then these two names will denote the Egyptians and Ethiopians.

To Tubal and Javan.] *Tubal* is elsewhere joined with *Meshech:* (see Gen. x. 2. Ezek. xxxviii. 2.) and they are generally thought to denote the Tartars, Scythians, and those who live in the most northern parts of the world. By *Javan* are meant the Ionians, Grecians, and the neighbouring nations, who live on the north side of the Mediterranean Sea.

To the isles afar off.] This expression denotes the west-

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erly parts of the world; for the *islands of the sea*, a phrase elsewhere used, mean the same with the islands of the Western Sea. (See the notes upon xi. 11. xxiv. 14.) And the prophet Hosea, speaking of the return of the Jews from their dispersions in several parts of the world, saith, *When the Lord shall roar like a lion* (which denotes some efficacious call of Providence, or powerful preaching of the gospel), *then the children shall tremble* (or come flying, as the following verse explains it) *from the west.* (Hosea xi. 10.) So that by the *isles afar off, which have not heard God's fame*, may be meant even the West Indies themselves.

Ver. 20. *And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations.*] The words may be understood, either of the Jews, *that are escaped*, converting the gentiles, and *bringing* them for *an offering to God*, the very phrase which St. Paul uses, speaking of this subject: (Rom. xv. 16.) or else, that they shall convert their own brethren that still remain scattered in the remote countries of the gentiles. Or the place may be understood, in general, of the *mystical Israel*, which *shall be saved from all the ends of the earth.* (See xlv. 17. 22. 25.)

Upon horses, and in chariots—to my holy mountain Jerusalem.] God's *holy mountain* commonly signifies the church in the prophetical writings. (See the note upon ii. 2.) So the expressions of going up to God's holy mountain, in the several conveniences of carriage here mentioned, are an allusion to the Jews going up with their gifts and offerings to Jerusalem at the solemn festivals. (Compare lx. 9.) Or we may understand it, in a more literal sense, of the Jews returning to their own country, from their several dispersions, and hastening to Jerusalem, with joy and *singing psalms*, as the Septuagint express the sense. But this interpretation does not agree so well with the *new heavens* and *new earth* mentioned in the twenty-second verse, of which state these things are spoken.

Ver. 21. *And also I will take of them for priests, and for Levites.*] All that have a share in this blessed state (called the *new heavens* and *new earth*, in the following verse) shall be *priests unto God*, and attend upon his service without distraction. (Compare Rev. xx. 6.) Or the words may import the restoring the Jews to their ancient privilege of being *a kingdom of priests* to God, and continually attending his service. (See lxi. 6.)

Ver. 22. *For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.*] This new state of things, already described lxv. 17, &c. is created to be inhabited by the mystical Israel, *who shall be saved from all the parts of the earth with an everlasting salvation*, (xlv. 17, 18. 22. 25.)

Ver. 23. *And it shall come to pass, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh shall come and worship before me.*] These saints shall not have set times for God's worship, but shall be perpetually employed in serving and praising him. (See Rev. iv. 8. vii. 15.) The worship of the New Jerusalem is represented by the practice of the Jewish temple, as if the prophet had said, that state shall be one continued festival. It is usual with the prophets to describe the gospel dispensations by the usages of their own times. (See the notes upon xix. 19. lvi. 7. and compare Zech. xiv. 16.) These metaphors are continued even in the writings of the New Testament, where the church is represented by the *twelve tribes of Israel*, (Luke xxii. 30. Rev. vii. 4.) The Christians are called Jews, Rom. ii. 28, 29. Rev. ii. 9. and the heavenly sanctuary is described by the model of the Jewish tabernacle, Rev. iv. 5, 6, xi. 1, 2. 19. xv. 5, 6.

Mr. White, in his argument upon this chapter, and elsewhere, insists upon these and such-like expressions, as irrefragable arguments, that the sense of this prophet is to be confined to occurrences in or near his own time. But this way of arguing shews him not to have thoroughly considered the genius of the prophetical writings, which as they are always full of metaphors, and love to give but dark hints of things, wrapped up in symbols and figures, so the very life and spirit of them consist in pointing out the times of the Messias, and the state of God's kingdom under his administration: according to that maxim delivered by the angel, Rev. xix. 10. that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, without which it is but a kind of dead letter.

Ver. 24. *And they shall go forth.*] Without the circuit of the *new Jerusalem*, (Rev. xxi. 12.) or the *camp of the saints*, (Rev. xx. 9.) The expression alludes to the custom of the Jews, of executing offenders without the camp or city, and excluding all unclean persons out of it. (See Numb. v. 1. 4. Heb. xiii. 11—13.)

And look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me.] Those enemies of God that were slain in the battle, mentioned ver. 16.

Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.] They shall be like so many putrefying carcasses, lying slain in the field of battle, and overrun with worms and stench; they shall be a lasting monument of God's justice, like Sodom, set forth for an example of the Divine vengeance, of that eternal fire which is prepared for the ungodly in hell. (Compare Judith xvi. 17. Ecclus. vii. 17. Mark ix. 44.)

And they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.] Their reproach shall be perpetual; men shall abhor them as they do the stench of a camp of dead bodies, or the filth of the valley of Hinnom, the figure and picture of hell. (See the notes upon xxx. 33. and compare Ezek. xxxix. 11. 16.)

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A

COMMENTARY

UPON

THE PROPHECY AND LAMENTATIONS

OF

JEREMIAH.

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

WILLIAM,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE, LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY;

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN;

AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY-COUNCIL.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THE following papers, writ in pursuance of a Commentary formerly published upon the prophet Isaiah, I humbly beg leave to offer to your Grace; entreating your favourable acceptance of my sincere endeavours to give some farther light to the writings of the Prophet that succeeds next in order.

Who was a *burning* as well as a *shining light* in the church of God; and whose fervent piety and zeal discover themselves, in his many affectionate strains of an ardent devotion, and in the warmth and vigour of a moving eloquence, so justly admired by all attentive readers: a talent that all men must acknowledge your Grace to be a perfect master of: you having, in an inferior station, given abundant proofs of your great abilities, both in exhorting, and convincing gainsayers.

One great use of the writings of the prophets, is to instruct us in the *signs of the times;* and though the warnings they give had a particular aspect upon their own age, yet they were likewise *written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* This rule, if we should apply to our own case, and compare some circumstances of the present times, with the representation this Prophet gives of his own, when through a general corruption, both of principles and practice, men were so far from being *ashamed of their abominations,* (Jer. vi. 15.) that they openly avowed and justified them: the parallel will give us just cause to apprehend, that as we have equalled the Jews in sin, we may be made like them in punishment. But we are willing to hope better things, and cannot but look upon it as an earnest of God's favourable intention towards this church, that his providence hath advanced a person to preside over it, so excellently qualified as your Grace is, with piety, learning, and prudence, and all other accomplishments, requisite to support and adorn that high station.

Which that your Grace may long and prosperously enjoy to the glory of God, and the service of his church, and that your wise and steady conduct may be a blessing to the present age, and endear your memory to posterity, shall always be the earnest prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient and dutiful Servant,

WILLIAM LOWTH.

CONCERNING THE

AUTHOR AND THE SUBJECT

OF THE ENSUING

PROPHECY.

THE Prophet Jeremy is called the son of Hilkiah, (i. 1.) whom Clemens Alexandrinus (Strom. lib. i. p. 390. edit. Oxon.) supposes to be the same Hilkiah, who was high-priest in the reign of Josiah. (See 2 Kings xxii. 4. 8.)

But this opinion seems not so probable, because then the prophet would not have been described as living with the inferior priests at Anathoth, inasmuch as the high-priest and his family always kept their residence at Jerusalem. He was very young when he was called by God to the prophetical office; (i. 6.) in the exercise of which he continued

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above forty years, and is said by St. Jerome, in his argument to this prophecy, to have been stoned to death at Tahapanes in Egypt, whither he and the remains of the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem, were carried by Johanan and the rest of their leaders, xliii. 7. (See the note upon that place.)

There were several collections of Jeremy's prophecies: one made by God's command in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, (xxxvi. 2.) This contained all the prophecies he had published to that time, as well against the other nations, as against the Jews. The former of these in our present collection, are put by themselves at the end of the book, from chap. xlvi. to the end of the list: but, in the present copies of the Septuagint, they follow immediately after the thirteenth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter.

Another collection of these prophecies is mentioned, i. 3. comprehending all that Jeremy had uttered to the time of the captivity. These may probably be supposed to have been collected by Baruch's amanuensis: and were put together without any regard to the order of time, just as we find the collection of Psalms was made.

To this was added another collection of Jeremy's prophecies, published about the time of his going down into Egypt, contained in chap. xlii.—xliv. at the end of which, Esdras, or some others, after the captivity, who undertook the completing the Scripture-canon, added those prophecies which Jeremy had spake against the gentiles, thinking it most proper to put them by themselves, because they treat of a different subject from the rest of the book: and one of them, *viz.* that against Elam, (xlix. 34.) bears date after the first collection made by Jeremy himself, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign.

The reason why the fifty-second chapter was added at the end of the book, shall be assigned in the Argument of that chapter.

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

The first chapter contains the general commission which God gave to Jeremiah to execute the prophetical office, as well to the Jews in particular, as to the heathen countries round about them: and a promise of the Divine assistance in the discharge of his duty.

Ver. 1. *THE words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin.*] Anathoth was one of the cities allotted to the priests: (see Josh. xxi. 13. 18.) that town was but three miles from Jerusalem, as St. Jerome tells us in his preface to this prophecy, but yet was in the land of Benjamin, as, indeed, was part of Jerusalem itself. (See Josh. xviii. 28.) Judah and Benjamin lying so near together, makes them sometimes reckoned but as one tribe. (See 1 Kings xi. 32.)

Ver. 2, 3. *To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah—unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah.*] Jeremiah prophesied by the space of forty-one years and upward, if we take in the prophecies he uttered in Egypt after the captivity, (chap. xliii. xliv.) which are not included within this period. We may observe from the sixth verse of this chapter, that Jeremy was very young when he was called by God to the prophetic office.

Unto the carrying away Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.] The Jews underwent several captivities before their final desolation. The first was when Jehoiakim was carried away captive, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 12.) There was another captivity in the eighteenth year of his reign. (See below, lii. 29.) Then followed, in the next year, that captivity which accompanied the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, in the fifth month. (See ibid. ver. 21.) In memory of which calamity, the *fast of the fifth month* was observed during the seventy years of captivity; and continued down to aftertimes. (See Zech. vii. 5. viii. 19.)

Ver. 4. *Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] This seems to have been a visible appearance of the Divine Majesty, performed by the Son of God, or the second person of the blessed Trinity, (see the notes on Isa. vi. 1.) who appeared in a human shape, as a preludium to the incarnation; first to Adam, (Gen. iii. 8.) then to Abraham, (Gen. xviii. 2.) afterward to Joshua, (Josh. v. 13.) as, also, to Ezekiel, (Ezek. i. 26.) and to Daniel, (Dan. viii. 15. 18. x. 6. 10.) Of the same kind was this vision represented to Jeremiah. (Compare the ninth verse of this chapter with the forementioned texts of Daniel.) It is out of this glory, or Schechinah, the following words were uttered.

Ver. 5. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.*] Some persons have been designed for certain offices, by a particular decree of God, from or before their coming into the world. So was John Baptist, (Luke i. 15.) and St. Paul, (Gal. i. 15.) and the prophet Jeremy here in the text. This favour is expressed by *knowing him*, or taking especial notice of him; as if a prince should single one particular person out of a multitude, and call him by name, and appoint him to some honourable office, or trust. So God expresses the peculiar favour he had for Moses, by saying, *I know thee by name*, (Exod. xxxiii. 12. 17.) The same thing is likewise expressed by God's *sanctifying him*, or setting him apart for the prophetical office: the same phrase being applied to our Saviour himself, whom God, in an eminent manner, *sanctified*, or set apart for the offices of king, priest, and prophet, and, in due time, *sent him into the world* to execute the same; (John x. 36.) who, therefore, is called, by way of eminence, Τὸ Ἅγιον, (Luke i. 35.) *that holy person*, for so the neuter is sometimes taken. (See John iii. 6. 1 John v. 4.)

And ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.] To other nations as well as the Jews. (See xxv. 15. 18—20. and the latter part of this prophecy, from the forty-sixth chapter.)

Ver. 6. *Then said I, Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak; for I am a child.*] He excuses himself from taking the prophetical office, by reason of his youth, which made him unable to speak with that authority which is requisite for the discharge of so weighty a function. (See below, ver. 8. 17, 18. and compare Exod. iv. 10. vi. 12.) We cannot infer from hence, that Jeremy was at this time within the years of childhood: for he may call himself a child by way of extenuating his abilities; so Solomon calls himself a *little child*, 1 Kings iii. 7. who at that time was married, as appears by the first verse of that chapter, and must have been at least twenty years old. And the word *child*, or youth, is

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elsewhere used of those who are arrived at the first years of manhood. So Isaac is called a *lad*, or *youth*, Gen. xxii. 3. when he must have been between twenty and thirty years old. Accordingly, the Romans extended the word *adolescentia*, or *youth*, to thirty years of age. (See Casaub. in Polyb. p. 29. et Exercit. in Baron. n. 99.)

Ver. 7. *But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child.*] God refuses to accept of his excuse, and renews his commission to him to execute the prophetical office. So God refused to accept of the excuse Moses made upon a like occasion. (See Exod. vi. 30. vii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 8. *Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee.*] The style of God's commission to his prophets and messengers commonly runs in these words, *I am with thee:* (see Exod. iii. 12. Deut. xxxi. 8. Josh. i. 5.) importing that God, who sent them, will enable them to discharge the office he has committed to them, and will give them strength proportionable to the business they undertake. To reprove the faults of all persons, the great men of the world, as well as those of lower degree, with that plainness and impartiality which the prophets used, requires a more than ordinary degree of courage; for which cause the promise of God's assistance was particularly necessary to encourage them in the discharge of that unthankful office; and in confidence of that assistance, they are exhorted to *be strong and of a good courage: not to fear nor be dismayed.* (See Deut. xxxi. 8. Josh. i. 9. Ezek. ii. 6. iii. 9.)

Ver. 9. *Then the Lord put forth his hand,* [see the note on ver. 4.] *and touched my mouth: and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*] Whereas the prophet complained, (ver. 6.) that he could not speak; God, by this visible sign, assures him, that he had conferred upon him the gift of utterance, and imparted his will and purposes in such a measure to him, that his words ought to be esteemed the oracles of God. (Compare Isa. vi. 7. li. 16.)

Ver. 10. *See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out,* &c.] The prophets are said to do things, when they declare God's purpose of doing them. So Ezekiel saith he was *sent to destroy the city;* (xliii. 3.) that is, to prophesy concerning its destruction. And Isaiah is commanded to *make the heart of the Jews fat; i. e.* to foretell their obduration and incredulity, (vi. 10.) In the same sense we are to understand the text here, that God had appointed Jeremiah to declare his purposes concerning the overthrow or restoration of kingdoms and nations, according as they either repented of their sins, or persisted in their evil doings. (Compare xviii. 7.) In pursuance of these directions, some of the following prophecies foretell the destruction of the Jewish nation, and several of the neighbouring countries: (see xxv. 15, &c.) others of them contain predictions of the restoration of the Jews, (as chap. xxx. xxxi.) and also of several other nations against which he had prophesied. (See xlviii. 47. xlix. 6. 39.)

Ver. 11, 12. *Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.*] The almond is one of the first trees that buds and blossoms in the spring; so a branch of that which buds and blossoms upon it, is a proper emblem to denote God's hastening the execution of the predictions he made by his prophet, who lived to see most of his prophecies fulfilled. The Hebrew words *shaked*, an *almond-tree*, and *shoked*, *hastening*, have an affinity in their sound: (such paronomasias being frequent in Scripture; see the note upon Isa. xxiv. 17.) so that not only the nature of the almond-tree, but the very sound of the Hebrew word that signifies it, denotes God's hastening to fulfil the prophecies which Jeremiah uttered by his directions.

Ver. 13. *And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething-pot, and the face thereof was towards the north.*] The steam of a seething-pot doth fitly represent God's judgments, which are often compared to a fire, as the afflictions of the Israelites are to a *smoking furnace*, (Gen. xv. 17.) This steam was represented to the prophet as raised by a fire, or driven by a wind coming from the north; for the latter part of the verse may be better rendered thus: *And the appearance of it was as coming from the north.* So that the pot or caldron itself may denote Judea or Jerusalem in particular, (expressed in the same figure, Ezek. xi. 3. 7. xxiv. 3.) set on fire and consumed by an army of Chaldeans, who lay northward of Judea. (See iv. 6. vi. 1.)

Ver. 15. *For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north.*] There were lesser kings and princes, who were either allies or tributaries to the Babylonian empire. (Compare xxxiv. 1. l. 41. li. 27.) God saith, all these shall join their forces with the Chaldean army in order to the conquest of Judea. The word *family* is equivalent to people here, and viii. 3. x. 25. where these words, *The families that call not upon thy name*, are equivalent to *the kingdoms that call not upon thy name*, in Psal. lxxix. 6. *And they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem.*] Each prince shall pitch his royal pavilion, with all the marks of sovereignty belonging to it, in token of having obtained a complete victory, and taken entire possession of the city. (See xliii. 10.)

Ver. 16. *And I will utter all my judgments against them touching their wickedness.*] Then I will no longer speak unto them by my prophets, whose threatenings they have not regarded, but the judgments I bring upon them shall declare their wickedness, and the vengeance due unto them for their idolatries. (Compare iv. 12. where the words are the same in the original.)

Ver. 17. *Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee.*] It being the custom of the eastern countries to wear long garments, which they girded up about their loins, when any business required nimbleness or expedition: the phrase signifies dispatching any message with all possible vigour and intention of mind as well as of body. (See Job xxxviii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 13.) We may apply both senses to the text here; for God commands the prophet instantly to undertake the office he designed him for, and to discharge it with courage and presence of mind, as it follows.

Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.] The Hebrew verb is the same in both parts of the sentence, which may literally be rendered thus: *Be not confounded at their faces* (when thou appearest in their presence), *lest I confound thee before them.* God exhorts him not to be dismayed at the scoffs and ill treatment he should meet with from hardened sinners, especially from such who

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think their power and authority set them above reproof, and will bear them out in whatsoever they do. (See Ezek. xi. 6.) He tells him it is better to bear the reproaches of men, than the reproofs of God, who will call him to a strict account how he hath discharged his duty. (See 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17.)

Ver. 18. *For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city,* &c.] God promises to defend him against all the open assaults and secret contrivances of his enemies, the kings, princes, and priests, as well as those of an inferior rank. (See xv. 10. xx. 2. xxiii. 18, &c. xxvi. 10. xxxv. 15. xxxviii. 6.)

Ver. 19. *And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee.*] They shall no more be able to prevail against thee, than they could against an impregnable wall or fortress, (ver. 8.)

For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.] I will shew my power in delivering thee out of all thy troubles, when thy adversaries shall become a prey to their enemies. (See xxxix. 11, 12. and ver. 8. of this chapter.)

CHAP. II.

ARGUMENT.

God expostulates with his people, for their ungrateful returns to his former benefits: and upbraids them with their fondness for the idolatries of the neighbouring countries.

Ver. 2. *GO and cry in the ears of Jerusalem.*] In the most public parts of the city, that every one may hear.

I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.] I remember my first kindness to thee, when I delivered thee out of Egypt: (compare Hos. ii. 15.) and espoused thee to myself to be my own peculiar people. The covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Sinai, is commonly represented under the metaphor of a *marriage-contract.* (See iii. 15. Ezek. xvi. 8. 60.) Upon this account, idolatry is called *going a whoring after other gods;* because it is the same degree of unfaithfulness to God, which an adulteress is guilty of in respect of her husband.

When thou wentest after me in a land that was not sown.] When I conducted thee through the wilderness, and there fed thee miraculously. (See ver. 6.)

Ver. 3. *Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase.*] The Jews were then consecrated to me as a holy nation: (see Exod. xix. 5, 6.) as a people particularly dedicated to me, as the first-fruits of the increase of the ground are, by their law, consecrated to God, (Exod. xxiii. 19.)

All that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.] The words were better rendered in the preter-perfect tense, as the future is often taken: *all they that devour him were trespassers, evil came upon them; i. e.* they that went about to destroy God's people were reputed by him as sacrilegious persons, as if they had devoured holy things, and accordingly met with remarkable punishments. Such were the Egyptians, Amalekites, &c. From the verb here rendered to *offend* comes *asham, a trespass-offering,* which was particularly appointed to be offered by those, who had ignorantly taken of the holy things set apart to God's service. (See Lev. v. 15. xxii. 14. 16.)

Ver. 4. *Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.*] Compare xxxi. 1. The prophet directs his discourse to the twelve tribes, as he does afterward, iii. 14, &c. Nor was the captivity of the ten tribes so total, but that there were some Israelites still remaining among the Assyrian colonies. (See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. 33. xxxv. 18.)

Ver. 5. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me.*] The same expostulation God makes by his prophet Micah, vi. 3.

That they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?] That they have forsaken me, and followed the idolatrous worship of the heathens. (Compare 2 Kings xvii. 15.) Idols are commonly styled *vanities* (see particularly in this prophecy, x. 15. xiv. 22. xvi. 19.) and *things of nought,* (xiv. 14.) because *an idol is nothing in the world,* as St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. viii. 4. Not being what it pretends to be, nor can it bring any profit to them that worship it. (See below, ver. 8.)

Ver. 6. *Neither said they, Where is the Lord—that led us through the wilderness,* &c.] God's sustaining such a vast multitude in a barren desert, was an amazing instance of his almighty power, and his goodness and care over his people. (See Deut. viii. 15, 16. xxxii. 10.)

Through a land of deserts and of pits.] The Hebrew word *shacha,* a *pit,* sometimes is put for destruction, as Psal. xxx. 3. and is near akin to the word *shachath,* which signifies death and corruption. The Chaldee paraphrase upon Job xxx. 14. explains *shoah, desolation,* by *shaka.* Thus we may expound it here, a place where there were no comforts or conveniences of life: to the same sense it is called in the following words, *a land of the shadow of death.*

Ver. 7. *And I brought you into a plentiful country,* &c.] The Hebrew reads, *into the land of Carmel:* which was so plentiful a part of Judea, that the word from thence came to signify a fruitful place, in general. (See Isa. x. 18. xxix. 17. xxxii. 15.) Judea is commonly called by Moses, *a land that flows with milk and honey.*

But when ye entered, ye defiled my land.] By your sins, (Lev. xviii. 25. Numb. xxxv. 34.) chiefly by your idolatries; (Psal. cvi. 38.) that sin receiving great aggravation from hence, that the people should thereby renounce God's authority in that very land, whose propriety he had reserved to himself, (Lev. xxv. 23.) though he had graciously bestowed upon them the use of it.

Ver. 8. *The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not.*] The priests, whose office it was to instruct others in their duty, (see Mal. ii. 6, 7.) were ignorant or regardless of it themselves: and this was the principal reason of that degeneracy of manners which prevailed among the people. (See Hos. iv. 6.)

The pastors also transgressed against me.] A pastor or shepherd is taken in the prophets for a civil magistrate, as well as an ecclesiastical governor, as has been observed upon Isa. lvi. 11. In the former sense it is used in several places of this prophecy. (See vi. 3. xxv. 34. xlix. 19.) Which sense agrees best with the scope of the text here, which is to shew, that all orders and degrees of men in authority had contributed to that corruption of manners

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which had overspread the nation. (Compare ver. 26. of this chapter.)

The prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.] See xxii. 13. and the notes upon ver. 5. of this chapter, and vii. 31.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore I will plead with you, saith the Lord.*] The expression is taken from the pleas of plaintiff and defendant used in the courts of judicature. (See Isa. xliii. 26.) It imports God's laying before them their demerits, how defective they have been in their duty, and what ungrateful returns they have made to him for all his favours. (See ver. 35. of this chapter.) And this he doth sometimes by word of mouth, and by the messages of his prophets. (See Hos. ii. 2. Micah vi. 2.) And sometimes he does it by his judgments, the manifest tokens of God's vengeance due to men's sins. (See Isa. lxvi. 16. Jer. xxv. 31. Ezek. xx. 36. xxxviii. 22.)

And with your children's children will I plead.] According to the tenor of the law, whereby God threatens to *visit the sins*, particularly the idolatry, of *the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*

Ver. 10. *For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.*] The isles of Chittim are the countries lying upon the Mediterranean Sea, (see the notes on Isa. xxiii. 1.) which lay west of Judea. Kedar, being part of Arabia, was eastward from thence: for Arabia is commonly called the *east country* in Scripture; (see Gen. x. 30. xxv. 6. Job i. 3.) and particularly the inhabitants of Kedar are called the *men of the east*, xlix. 28. of this prophecy. So the sense of the verse is, If you search from *east* to *west*, from one end of the world to the other, you will find no instance like this of the Jews' apostacy, mentioned in the following verse.

Ver. 11. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people hath changed their glory*, &c.] Men are very tenacious of the religion of their forefathers, and hardly prevailed upon to part with it, though the change be never so reasonable: whereas the Jews have changed the worship of the true God, who was their strength and their glory, for idols and vanities that cannot save nor protect them, (ver. 5.) God is called the *glory* of the Jews, because he chose the ark for the place where his glory should reside; for the same reason the temple is called the *throne of his glory*, xiv. 21. and they are said to have *changed their glory into the similitude of an ox*, Psal. cvi. 20. (a text exactly parallel with this place) when they made the golden calf; and instead of the Divine Schechinah, which should go before them, they chose that senseless idol to be their conductor. God may be called their *glory* for another reason, *viz.* because he chose them to be his peculiar people, and took them into his immediate care and protection: a privilege which no other nation could boast of. (See Deut. iv. 7.)

Ver. 12. *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this*, &c.] This is such a horrible wickedness, that the heavens themselves should be affrighted to behold it, and the celestial bodies withdraw their light and influences from that part of the world where such enormities are practised. Such rhetorical apostrophes to heaven and earth, import the unusualness, and likewise the indignity, of the things spoken of; implying them to be such, that if men take no notice of them, the elements themselves will testify against such practices. (Compare Isa. i. 1. Micah i. 2. vi. 2. Job xx. 27.)

Ver. 13. *They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters*, &c.] God is the author and giver of all blessings, both spiritual and temporal, from whom all good gifts are derived, as from an inexhaustible spring or fountain. (See Psal. xxxvi. 9.) And wherever else men place their happiness, whether in false religions, or in the uncertain comforts of worldly blessings, they will find themselves disappointed, just as they that expect to find water at broken cisterns or conduits. This particularly reflects upon the Jews renouncing the worship of the true God, and their dependance upon him, and betaking themselves to the alliance and protection of idolaters. (See ver. 18. 25. 36.)

Ver. 14. *Is Israel a servant? is he a home-born slave? why is he spoiled?*] God redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and adopted him to be his *son*, (Exod. iv. 22.) So that the servitude he now undergoes, and his being made a prey to so many foreign enemies, cannot be owing to his birth or primitive condition, but must be imputed to his sins, of which his slavery is the consequent. (Compare Isa. l. 1. lii. 3.)

Ver. 15. *The young lions roared upon him*, &c.] *i. e.* The kings of Syria, Assyria, and other neighbouring countries. (See Isa. i. 7.) Tyrants and oppressors are commonly compared to lions. (See below, li. 17. Job iv. 10, 11. Psal. xxxiv. 10. lviii. 6. Ezek. xix. 3. 6. Nahum ii. 11, 12.)

Ver. 16. *Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.*] Or, *feed upon thy crown:* so the margin reads; *i. e.* destroy and devour the principal, or best parts of the country. So the best spices are called *the head of spices*, Exod. xxx. 23. Cant. iv. 14. If we follow the reading of the text, the prophet pursues the metaphor of the lions, mentioned ver. 15. whose custom it is to *tear the arm with the crown of the head*, Deut. xxxiii. 20. Concerning Noph and Tahapanes, see xliii. 7. xliv. 1. By their children or inhabitants are meant the Egyptians in general. The verse may relate to the conquest that Pharaoh-Nechoh made of Judea, (2 Kings xxiii. 33.) which, though it happened after the time that this prophecy was uttered, may be spoken of here as already past; a way of speaking usual in the prophets. (See the note upon Isa. xxi. 9.)

Ver. 17. *When he led thee by the way.*] Who would have been thy guide and conductor, thy strength and support, (see Deut. xxxii. 10.) if thou hadst hearkened to his voice.

Ver. 18. *And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?*] The kings of Egypt and Assyria were the two most potent monarchs in the neighbourhood of Judea; and, according as either of those prevailed over the other, the Jews made their court to him who was the stronger, and desired his assistance. This is expressed by *drinking the water of Sihor*, or *Nile*, called so for its blackness or muddiness; (see Isa. xxiii. 3.) and of Euphrates, called here *the river* by way of eminence. (Compare Isa. xxvii. 12.) The expressions allude to ver. 13. where human assistances are called *broken cisterns*, and opposed to God, who, by reason of his all-sufficiency, is styled the *fountain of living waters*. The Septuagint render *Sihor*, Γηὼν, as if it were the same with the river *Gihon*, mentioned Gen. ii. 13. It is certain

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many of the ancients understood *Gihon* to be the *Nile*, particularly the author of Ecclus. xxiv. 27. And Ludolphus observes, that the *Nile* is now called by that name in the Ethiopic language. (See the Commentary upon his Ethiopic Hist. lib. i. n. 56.)

The waters of Sihor.] Some suppose *Sihor* to be the same with *the river of Egypt.* (See the note upon Ezek. xlvii. 19. and upon Amos vi. 14.)

Ver. 19. *Thy own wickedness shall correct thee,* &c.] The miseries that your own sins have brought upon you, are a sufficient instruction to you to break off your evil courses, and to return to God by a sincere repentance.

Ver. 20. *For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bonds; and thou saidst, I will not transgress.*] Upon several deliverances I gave thee, that out of Egypt, and in the times of the judges, thou didst promise to serve me faithfully. (See Exod. xix. 8. Josh. xxiv. 18. Judg. x. 16. 1 Sam. xii. 10.)

When upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wanderest, playing the harlot.] The sense would run easier, if we read, *Yet upon every high hill,* &c. and so the particle *ki* is translated, xxii. 24. of this prophecy. God upbraids them with the breach of promise, that after all their resolutions of amendment, they still relapsed to the former sin of worshipping idols upon high places, and in shady groves, which the law expressly forbade, (Deut. xii. 2. Ezek. xvi. 24.) The idolatrous kings built temples for their idols upon high mountains and high places. (See 1 Kings xii. 31. xiii. 32.) These were still frequented after the religious kings had destroyed all other monuments of idolatry. (See 1 Kings xv. 24. xxii. 43.)

Ver. 21. *Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed,* &c.] The laws which I gave thee, and the means of grace which I afforded thee, were sufficient to have made thee fruitful in every good work, though now thou art strangely degenerate. The church is often represented under the metaphor of a vine (see Isa. v. 1. and the parallel texts referred to there in the margin), and the means of grace under the notion of planting. (See Isa. lx. 21. lxi. 3. Matt. xv. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 6.)

Ver. 22. *For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take unto thee much soap,* &c.] Though thou usest ever so many methods of washing away thy sins, such as are the rites of expiation prescribed by the law, or practised by idolaters: though thou insistest never so much upon thy own innocence and justification, (see ver. 23.) yet the marks or stains of thy sins will always appear in the sight of God, till they are done away by a sincere repentance and reformation. Expositors are divided about the sense of the word *niktam,* which our translators render *marked;* and in which sense the word is taken for a *spot* or *mark,* in the Chaldee and Syriac tongues. But Bochart thinks the word *catham* with *caph,* equivalent to *catham* with *cheth,* and expounds it *hidden,* or *laid up;* as men's sins are said to be, when God, perhaps, bears with them for the present, but intends to call them to account in due time. (See Deut. xxxii. 34. Job xiv. 17. Hos. xiii. 12.)

Ver. 23. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim?*] The Jews, it seems, have found out distinctions, whereby to reconcile the worship of the true God with those religious rites, which they paid to the deities of the heathen, called here *Baalim.* These they pretended were only inferior demons or spirits, or the souls of men departed, and might be worshipped in subordination to the supreme God. The word *Baalim* answers in the Hebrew to κύριοι πολλοὶ, (1 Cor. viii. 5.) whom St. Paul mentions as the inferior deities of the heathen.

See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done.] That horrible practice of the Jewish idolaters in burning their sons and daughters in the fire, in the valley of Hinnom, (see vii. 32.) is an effectual confutation of those pretences whereby they justified their innocence, since this was a way of worship expressly forbidden by God: (Lev. xx. 2, &c.) and such an impious one, as none but the devil could invent.

Ibid. and Ver. 24. *Thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways; a wild ass used to the wilderness,* &c.] The particle *as,* is to be supplied in both these sentences, as it is frequently understood. (See note on Isa. xxi. 8.) The prophet persists in comparing their fondness for variety of idols to the rage of lust, (which metaphor is pursued at large by Ezekiel, chap. xvi. xxiii.) and upon that account he resembles them to these wild beasts, which have their constant seasons of breeding, and are then violently set upon satisfying their lust, and not to be caught or tamed. The comparisons withal set forth the indefatigable pains the Jews took in applying themselves to foreign princes for their succour and alliance, (compare ver. 36.) instead of relying upon God, and a strict observance of his laws. These practices of theirs are often reproved in the prophets. (See Isa. xxx. 1, &c. lvii. 9, 10. Hos. v. 13. xii. 1.)

All they that seek her, will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.] The hunters know the seasons of catching these wild creatures, and never try to take them but in a proper time. And it is as much in vain to offer any arguments to this people, to reclaim them from their eager pursuit after idolatry. The time of affliction is the only season when they will hearken to God's voice. (See ver. 27. Hos. v. 15.)

Ver. 25. *Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst.*] Do not wear out thy shoes, or sandals, and expose thyself to thirst and weariness, in undertaking long journeys, to make new alliances with idolaters. Some think in these expressions, their persisting in idolatry is compared to the lewdness of common harlots, and the sottishness of an habitual drunkard. (Compare Ezek. xvi. 25. Deut. xxix. 19.)

But thou saidst, There is no hope.] The words of desperate sinners, who are resolved to continue in their wickedness, in spite of all the reason that can be offered to the contrary. (Compare xviii. 12.)

For I have loved strangers.] Or strange gods. (Compare iii. 13. Deut. xxxii. 16.) They were resolved to be like the heathen round about them; to court their friendship, and to partake of their idolatries.

Ver. 26. *As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed,* &c.] As a thief hath nothing to say for himself, but is perfectly confounded when he is taken in the very act; so the house of Israel have no manner of plea wherewith to excuse their idolatry, but only an impudent denial of the fact itself. (See ver. 23.)

Ver. 27. *Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth.*] Giving the title of father due to God, as the sovereign author and preserver

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of all things, (see iii. 19.) to senseless images, which are indeed no better than what they appear to be, wood and stone. (See the note on Isa. xliv. 13.)

For they have turned their back unto me, and not their face.] A token of contempt and aversion. (See xviii. 17. xxxii. 33.) The word *noreph*, properly signifies the hinder part of the neck, but is used for the back parts, particularly xlviii. 39. we read, *how Moab turned the back with shame!*

But in the time of trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.] As they did formerly. (See 1 Sam. xii. 13. Psal. lxxviii. 34.)

Ver. 28. *But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble.*] God returns the same answer he formerly did, when their distresses made them seek him by a forced submission. (See Judg. x. 14.)

For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.] Every county and city hath its peculiar deity, according to the custom of the heathen. (See 2 Kings xvii. 30, 31. Hos. viii. 11. x. 1.)

Ver. 29. *Wherefore will ye plead with me?*] Why do you insist upon your innocency? (See ver. 35.) Why do you lay claim to my former promises, as if you had not forfeited your title to them by your sins?

Ver. 30. *In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction.*] The design of God's judgments is men's reformation; and where they do not attain this end, it shews that such a people are incorrigible. The words are directed to the land of Judea, whose inhabitants are called its children, v. 7. (Compare Isa. i. 5.)

Your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.] You are so far from receiving correction, that you take away the lives of those prophets who reprove you, and exhort you to amend your ways. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Nehem. ix. 26. Acts vii. 52.)

Ver. 31. *O generation, see ye the word of the Lord: Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?*] Consider what I say to you from the mouth of God: Have ye not been plentifully provided for by him? has he been backward in bestowing his kindness upon you? To this sense some render the latter part of the sentence a *backward land*, a land of snow, clouds, and dark vapours, where the fruits spring or ripen late, for want of the kindly warmth of the sun; a character that did by no means belong to Judea.

Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will no more come at thee?] Words that imply casting off God's authority, and rejecting him from being their Lord and sovereign. (Compare Psal. xii. 4.)

Ver. 32. *Can a maid forget her ornaments, and a bride her attire?* &c.] God was the glory and ornament of the Jewish nation, upon whose favour and protection they so justly valued themselves, and were thereby distinguished from other nations. (See Deut. iv. 7, 8. 2 Sam. vii. 23, 24.) So that it is a just matter of astonishment, that this people, called by his name, should now for so many years renounce their relation to him, who is their truest glory. (See ver. 11.)

Ver. 33. *Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?*] The prophet alludes (as before, ver. 20.) to the practices of a common harlot, who decks herself, and uses all the inveigling arts that may recommend her to her gallants: in like manner have the Jews tried all methods to gain the friendship and assistance of foreign idolaters, who are called her *lovers*. (See iii. 1. iv. 13. xxii. 22.) Noldius expounds it, Why dost thou justify thy ways, or insist upon thy innocence? (compare ver. 35.) and translates the particle *laken* [therefore] *whereas*. (See his Concordance, p. 507.)

Therefore hast thou also taught the wicked one thy ways.] Thou hast by this means, not only confirmed those nations in their idolatrous practices, but hast also taught them to practise new idolatries which they were not accustomed to.

Ver. 34. *Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls* (or lives) *of the poor innocents.*] Of the children offered in sacrifice to Moloch. (See ver. 23. xix. 4. Psal. cvi. 38.) The guilt of that innocent blood was as evident upon them as if they had murdered them with their own hands, and the stains of their blood had been found upon their clothes.

I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.] It is become a national sin. (See vii. 31. xix. 4, 5.) Some render the former part of the sentence thus; *Thou didst not find them breaking up* [a house, like *thieves*], who might be killed immediately upon the spot, according to the law; (Exod. xxii. 2.) *i. e.* thou didst not find them guilty of any such notorious wickedness as to deserve present death.

Ver. 35. *Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me*, &c.] The people insisting still upon their own innocence, God tells them he will debate the case with them, and prove the contrary. (See before, ver. 9. 23. 29.)

Ver. 36. *Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?*] He reproves them for their various methods of courting the alliance of foreign idolaters, which implied a distrust of God's protection. (See before, ver. 13. 18. 23. 25.)

Thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.] Ahaz made himself tributary to the king of Assyria, but it turned to his disgrace and ruin. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 21.) In like manner shall ye be disappointed in your expectations of succour from Egypt. (See xxxvii. 5. 7. Lam. iv. 17. 2 Kings xxiv. 7.)

Ver. 37. *Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thy hands upon thy head.*] The ambassadors thou sendest to Egypt shall return with disappointment and confusion. (See 2 Sam. xiii. 19.) For God will not prosper these unlawful means thou makest use of for thy preservation. (See ver. 36.)

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

Under the metaphor of a woman's being false to her husband, God sets forth the idolatry both of Israel and Judah: he earnestly exhorts them to repentance, and promises, upon their repentance, in due time to receive them into favour.

Ver. 1. *SHALL not the land be greatly polluted?*] The words allude to Deut. xxiv. 4. where it is said, that if a man take her to wife again, who had been divorced from him, it is *such an abomination as causeth the land to sin.* Such a practice would give encouragement to a *community of wives*, which must produce all manner of uncleanness and confusion.

But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers.] Thou hast entered into a confederacy with many foreigners; (see

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the note on ii. 33.) and learned their idolatries: (compare ii. 20.) a thing expressly forbidden in the law of Moses. (See Exod. xxxiv. 16. Deut. xii. 30. 1 Kings xi. 1, 2.)

Ver. 2. *Lift up thine eyes to the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with.*] Idolatry is usually expressed by *going a whoring after other gods;* (see the note on ii. 2.) who were worshipped in the high places. (See ii. 20.)

In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness.] Their fondness for idolatry is compared to the lewdness of a common strumpet, who *lies in wait for men as for a prey,* (Prov. xxiii. 28.) or *as a robber* (so the margin reads), the same comparison which is here used; the Arabians being remarkable for living upon robberies, and lying in wait for travellers.

Ver. 3. *Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain.*] Compare ix. 12. xiv. 4. God threatens, as a punishment of the people's sins, to make the *heavens iron,* (Deut. xxviii. 22.) The climate of Judea wanted rain at two seasons; the first was just after seed-time, (see Isa. xxx. 23.) called the *former rain;* the other not long before harvest, called the *latter rain,* (Joel ii. 23. compared with Amos iv. 7.)

And [yet] *thou hast a whore's forehead,* &c.] All my judgments have made no impression upon thee, nor hast thou any remorse for thy wickedness. (Compare vi. 15. viii. 12.)

Ver. 4. *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?*] Notwithstanding their former obstinacy, God calls them still to repentance, to acknowledge the duty they owe to God, both as their father, (see ver. 19.) and their husband: for under both these ties God was related to them. (See ii. 27. and ver. 14. of this chapter.) God calls himself the guide of their youth, (compare Prov. ii. 17.) as having espoused them in the days of their youth before their manners were corrupted by idolatry. (See ii. 2. Hos. ii. 15.)

Ver. 5. *Will he reserve his anger for ever? or will he keep it to the end?*] God puts words into the people's mouths in this and the foregoing verse, whereby they might express their humiliation, and hope in his mercy, which they might still expect to find upon their true repentance, though upon account of their long provocations they had reason to despair of it.

Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.] Thy behaviour hath been in direct opposition to these kind admonitions; thou dost still persist in malicious wickedness, and by thy actions shewest the utmost hatred and despite against God and goodness.

Ver. 6. *The Lord also said unto me in the days of Josiah the king.*] This relates to the time when Josiah made a great reformation, and purged the land from the idols which had been set up in every part of it; (see 2 Kings xxiii.) wherein the people did outwardly comply with him, but still retained a kindness for their former idolatries. (Compare ver. 10. of this chapter with Zeph. i. 5. and 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27.)

Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?] See the note on vii. 24.

Ver. 7. *And I said unto her, after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me.*] I sent to her frequent messages by my prophets, exhorting her to repentance. (See 2 Kings xvii. 13.)

And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.] The two kingdoms of Israel and Judah are described as sisters in iniquity. The same metaphor is applied to Samaria and Jerusalem, the two metropolises of those kingdoms, (Ezek. xxiii. 4, &c.) The word *treacherous,* properly denotes a wife's being unfaithful to her husband; (see ver. 20.) and from thence it is applied to the sin of idolatry, which is spiritual whoredom, as hath been already observed.

Ver. 8. *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce.*] Or, *When for the sake of the adultery which backsliding Israel had committed, I had put her away.* The same metaphor is still pursued; God's casting off the ten tribes is expressed by giving them a *bill of divorce;* but such a one as differed from the common bills of divorce in this particular, that God was ready to receive them again, whenever they would return from their idolatries. (See ver. 1. of this chapter.) Upon which account, God denies that he had given his people a bill of divorce, Isa. l. 1. meaning such a one as was irreversible.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass, through the lightness* [or fame] *of her whoredom, that she defiled the land,* &c.] See ii. 7. 27.

Ver. 10. *And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart.*] See the note on ver. 6. That the generality of the people did not join sincerely in Josiah's reformation appears from hence, that immediately upon his death, they relapsed into the grossest idolatry. (See below, vii. 18. xix. 4, &c. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33.)

Ver. 11. *The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.*] Because Judah hath sinned against greater convictions, and would not take warning by that desolation which God brought upon the whole kingdom of Israel for their idolatries. (Compare Ezek. xvi. 51.)

Ver. 12. *Go, proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel,* &c.] The sin of the ten tribes being attended with more favourable circumstances than that of Judah, the prophet is commanded to call them to repentance, with promises of pardon. In order to this end, he is bid to direct his speech northward, *i. e.* towards Assyria and Media, whither the ten tribes were carried away captive, which countries lay north of Judea. (See ver. 18. l. 9. 41. compared with li. 11. 27.) The restoration of Israel as distinct from Judah, is the subject of several other prophecies. (See the note upon ver. 18.)

Ver. 13. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.*] Repentance is a condition necessarily required in order to their being restored to God's favour. (See Deut. xxx. 1—3.)

And hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree.] Hast gone a whoring after the gods of the neighbouring nations; for the word translated *strangers,* signifies strange gods. (Compare ii. 25.) The phrase *Thou hast scattered thy ways,* is taken from the lewdness of common harlots, who promiscuously prostitute themselves to all comers. (Compare Prov. xxx. 20.)

Ver. 14. *Turn you, O backsliding children.*] The prophet directed his speech, ver. 12. to the ten tribes: and now he addresses himself to Judah as well as to Israel,

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as being equally concerned in the mercies here promised. (See ver. 17, 18. and iv. 1—3.)

For I am married to you.] See ii. 2. and compare xxxi. 32. The phrase here and in the text last mentioned is the same, *baâlti bakem*, which Dr. Pocock is inclined to interpret to the sense of disregarding, or disdaining, and quotes some rabbies who expound the words to this sense, *I have of late disregarded you, but now I will take or choose you, one of a city*, &c. (See his miscellany notes upon Porta Mosis, p. 146.)

And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion.] The word *family* here is equivalent to a country or kingdom. (Compare i. 15. Zech. xiv. 17, 18.) Some expound the words to this sense: Although there be but one of you in a city, or two in a country, I will not leave those behind, but will give them a share in the general restoration of their brethren. (Compare Isa. xxvii. 12.) Others suppose that the words relate to their return from Babylon, when the whole congregation was but *forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, beside their servants*, (Ezra ii. 64.) a small number in comparison of those that stayed behind. But I conceive that this verse as well as the context, relates to the general restoration of the Jews, yet to come; and they import, that there shall be but a few of the Jews in comparison, to whom this promise shall belong, *viz.* those who are elsewhere called the *remnant*. (See the notes on Isa. i. 9. iv. 2. x. 22. and compare Ezek. xx. 38. Zech. xiii. 8, 9.)

Ver. 15. *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart*, &c.] This is likewise an evangelical promise. (Compare xxiii. 4.) Implying, that under the happy times here foretold, all governors both civil and ecclesiastical should faithfully discharge their trust, in duly governing and instructing the people committed to their charge; and all that are in authority shall answer that character God gives of David, that he was *a man after his own heart;* (1 Sam. xiii. 14.) whereas, at that time when Jeremiah lived, the princes, the priests, and prophets, were the ringleaders in seducing the people, and enticing them to idolatry. (See ii. 8.)

Ver. 16. *And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land.*] The words imply, that the Jews shall be gathered together from their several dispersions, and restored to their own country. (See the notes on Isa. xi. 11. lxi. 4.)

In those days—they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, &c.] In those times the Mosaical covenant shall be utterly forgotten, and passed over in silence as not worthy to be mentioned; (compare Isa. lxv. 17.) and all the external marks and ceremonies thereto belonging shall be laid aside. Such as were the ark, where the tables of the covenant were laid up, and the temple, which was the repository of the ark itself; (compare xliv. 22.) where, by the law of Moses, the Jews were bound to pay their yearly attendance, and offer up their solemn worship to God.

Neither shall that be done any more.] The margin reads, *Neither shall it be magnified any more;* to which sense the verb *nasah* is rendered by our translators, 1 Sam. xii. 6. But the original will bear this sense, which agrees better with the scope of the place: *Neither shall any more sacrifice be offered there.* In which sense the same verb is elsewhere taken. (See Exod. xxix. 38. Psal. lxvi. 15.)

Ver. 17. *At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered to it.*] Jerusalem is often called the *city of God:* (see Psal. xlviii. 1. lxxxvii. 3.) whereupon it is a fit type or figure of the church of God: (see Isa. lxvi. 20. Zech. viii. 3.) which the text tells us shall be called the *throne of the Lord; i. e.* God shall give evident proofs of his peculiar residence there, as the king and protector of his people, and in a more eminent manner than ever he did at the temple in Jerusalem. (Compare xiv. 21.) To this church *all the nations shall be gathered*, as it follows; *i. e.* the Jews and gentiles shall then be joined in one religious body or society, and worship God with *one mind and one mouth.*

The expression alludes to the Jews going up to Jerusalem at their solemn festivals. (See the notes upon Isa. ii. 3. lx. 9. lxvi. 20.)

To the name of the Lord.] To the church where God hath placed his name, as he promised to do in Solomon's temple, (1 Kings viii. 29.) and where he will give evident tokens of his power and presence.

Neither shall they walk any more after the imaginations of their evil heart.] God's restoring his ancient people the Jews, shall be attended with the bringing in of the *fulness of the gentiles* into the church, and the utter abolishing of all false and idolatrous ways of worship. (Compare Rom. xi. 25, 26. and see the notes on Isa. i. 29. lxvi. 12. 19.)

Ver. 18. *In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel.*] Most of the prophecies which mention the restoration of the Jews join Judah and Israel together, as equal sharers in that blessing. (See xxx. 3. xxxi. 1. 1. 4. 20. Isa. xi. 13. Ezek. xxxvii. 16. 22. Hos. i. 11. Zech. x. 6.)

They shall come together out of the land of the north.] See before ver. 12. i. 15. and compare xxxi. 8.

Ver. 19. *But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land?*] How can it be consistent with the Divine justice, for God to receive such a rebellious people into favour, to own them for his children, and restore them to the possession of that goodly inheritance which he gave to their fathers? Judea is elsewhere called a *pleasant land*, the *glory of all lands*, and the *land which God had espied out* for his chosen people. (See Ezek. xx. 6. Dan. viii. 9. xi. 16. 41. 45.)

A goodly heritage of the hosts of nations.] The words may be rendered, *a goodly heritage of the desire of nations*, taking *tsebaoth* [host] as the same in sense with *tsebi*, the foregoing word, and as a derivative from the Chaldee verb *tseba*, which signifies to desire, (Dan. v. 19. vii. 19.) This sense the Chaldee paraphrast follows. If we take *tsebaoth* in the usual sense which our translators follow, the phrase will import that land which the armies of the gentiles are to possess in the latter times, to which this prophecy relates; (see Ezek. xxxviii. 8.) when, according to our Saviour's prediction, *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles*, (Luke xxi. 24.) But after all, I am apt to think, that the Septuagint have hit upon the true sense of this place, who render it, *The inheritance of the Almighty God of the nations;* taking the word *tsebi* for a title belonging to God, denoting his superlative excellence. The word is used in a sense near akin to this, 2 Sam. i. 19. where it denotes the regal dignity of Saul. A great regard is to be paid to the authority of that version, because the com-

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pilers of it had better opportunities of knowing the extent of the Hebrew language, than we can have at this distance, and might have very good reasons for rendering some words in a singular and unusual signification, and such a one as the later rabbins and lexicographers have not observed. Upon these grounds, Bishop Pearson, Dr. Pocock, and other learned men, justify several passages in that translation, which are cited in the New Testament, and shew that the sense of the original is truly expressed by it.

And I said, Thou shalt call me, Father; and shalt not turn away from me.] Upon this condition I will restore thee into grace and favour, that thou acknowledge those benefits, which thou hast from time to time received at my hands, and vow faithful obedience to me. (Compare Deut. xxxii. 6. 1 Chron. xxix. 10.)

When the Jews called upon God as their Father in their prayers, they did it chiefly by way of confession, when they would acknowledge his former favours, together with the ungrateful returns they had made to him, and withal desired to express their trust in his mercies. (Compare ver. 4. of this chapter, Isa. lxiii. 16. lxiv. 8.) To address ourselves with an humble confidence and assurance to God as our Father, is the peculiar prerogative of us Christians, who have *received the adoption of sons*, whereupon *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father*, (Gal. iv. 5, 6.)

Ver. 20. *Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me.*] The Hebrew reads, *From her friend*, in which sense the word is taken, Hos. iii. 1. Idolatry being the breach of that covenant which God made with the Jews as their Lord and husband, is properly compared to the sin of whoredom, or a woman's being unfaithful to her husband's bed, as hath already been observed in several passages of this and the foregoing chapter. (Compare v. 11, 12. Isa. xlviii. 8.) The word *reang*, translated *husband*, properly signifies a *friend*, as our margin observes; but it is elsewhere used for a *husband*. (See Cant. v. 16.)

O house of Israel.] An expression denoting all the families or tribes of the Jews: (compare ii. 4.) called the *children of Israel* in the following verse.

Ver. 21. *A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel.*] The prophet foreseeing that the Jews will at length be touched with a hearty repentance for all their misdoings, represents them as bewailing themselves upon the high places, the scenes of their former idolatries. (Compare xxxi. 9. l. 4. Zech. xii. 10.)

Ver. 22. *Return, ye backsliding children*, &c.] This verse contains a dialogue between God and his people, wherein he offers gracious terms of pardon to them, and they make sincere professions of obedience to him.

Ver. 23. *Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, from the multitudes of mountains*, &c.] A continuation of that form of confession, begun ver. 22. drawn up with reference to the present state of the idolatrous Israelites; wherein they express their abhorrence of those idols they worshipped upon the hills and mountains; (see ver. 6.) and declare their firm adherence to, and dependance upon, the Lord their God. Idolatry was the great and crying sin of the Jews, in which case God particularly declared, that he would *visit the sins of the fathers upon the children.* (See Exod. xx. 5. Isa. lxv. 7.) Accordingly the Jews have a proverbial saying among them, *That there is no judgment inflicted upon Israel, wherein there is not an ounce of the golden calf.*

Ver. 24. *For shame hath devoured the labours of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.*] All the miseries of our captivity, implying the loss of our goods and substance, and the dispersion of our families and nearest relations: all these calamities which we and our forefathers have felt are the effects of our idolatry, of which we are now heartily ashamed, and which hath brought shame and confusion upon us. (Compare Ezek. xvi. 61. 63.) The idol Baal was by way of reproach called *Bosheth*, that is, *shame.* (See xi. 13. Hos. ix. 10.)

Ver. 25. *We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us.*] The expressions are taken from those who cast themselves down upon the ground, and cover themselves with dust or ashes, out of grief and anguish of mind. (Compare vi. 26. Isa. l. 11.)

By way of conclusion to the notes upon this chapter, I shall consider an objection which the Jews advance from the twenty-first and following verses of it; where the dispersion of that nation is charged upon their idolatry, and their conversion expressed by their deserting and renouncing that sin. From these passages, and others of a like nature, particularly Isa. lxv. 7. they conclude, that their present forlorn condition is not to be ascribed to their rejecting the true Messias, as we Christians believe.

To this objection an answer may be returned in these two particulars:

1. That the prophecies belonging to this matter, which were uttered near the times of the Babylonish captivity, or before the people's return from it, do so intermix the promises relating to their first or second restoration, that it is no easy matter to discern the transition from one to the other: the like ambiguity may be observed in many prophecies, relating to the first and second coming of the Messias. And we may assign a sufficient reason, why the prophecies that treat of the first and second dispersion of the Jews, should be delivered in such doubtful expressions, *viz.* because it would have discouraged the Jews from returning out of Babylon into their own country, if any ancienter prophecies had given them a distinct account of a second dispersion of their nation, and of the cause of so dreadful a calamity.

But, secondly, We may observe that some prophecies in the Old Testament do plainly ascribe the destruction of the Jewish church and nation to their rejecting and putting to death the Messias. To this purpose those words of Moses are very remarkable, (Deut. xviii. 19.) *It shall come to pass, that every soul that will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people*, as St. Peter explains the sense of that prophecy, Acts iii. 23. Daniel expressly assigns their sin of *cutting off the Messias*, as the cause of the destruction of their city and temple, (Dan. ix. 26.) And Zechary, who lived after the people's return from their first captivity, describes the mourning of the whole nation for their sin of piercing or crucifying Christ, as a preparative to their general restoration, (Zech. xii. 10. xiii. 1.) which repentance of theirs is only expressed in general terms by

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our prophet at the twenty-first verse of this chapter, and xxxi. 9.

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

The four first verses contain an earnest exhortation to repentance, which should have been joined to the former chapter, as being a continuation of the same subject. Afterward the prophet gives a very pathetical description of the miseries of his country, when it should be made the seat of war.

Ver. 1. *IF thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, then return unto me,* &c.] By Israel may be here meant the whole body of the Jewish nation. (See ii. 4. iii. 20.) Or else the prophet addresses himself to Israel in this verse, and to Judah in the third. The words here exhort the people not to satisfy themselves with an outward profession of repentance, but to make proof of their sincerity, by quitting their evil practices, and particularly their idolatry: for so the word *shikkutsim, abominations,* commonly signifies. If thou dost this, saith God, thou shalt never more be removed out of thy land, or carried away captive.

Ver. 2. *And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*] Swearing by the name of God, is mentioned elsewhere as a solemn part of religious worship, and opposed to the custom of swearing by false gods, which was practised among idolaters. (See Isa. xlv. 23. xlviii. 1. lxv. 16. Amos viii. 14. Zeph. i. 5.) But this religious invocation of the name of God, as the just judge of the world, must be used only for the manifestation of the truth, and the maintenance of right and justice.

And the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.] A prediction of the gospel-times, when the heathens should join with the true Israelites, in paying all solemn acts of worship and devotion to the true God alone; (see Isa. lxv. 16.) and in ascribing all honour and glory to him and to his only Son, the Messias, in whom *all nations* were to be *blessed.* (See Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8. and compare Isa. xlv. 25.)

Ver. 3. *For* [or surely] *thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.*] In this verse the prophet addresses himself to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, and exhorts them to repentance and reformation, under the metaphor of ploughing up their fallow ground, which had lain a long while uncultivated, and clearing it from thorns, that it might be capable of receiving good seed. (Compare Hos. x. 12. Matt. xiii. 5.)

Ver. 4. *Circumcise yourselves unto the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts.*] Compare ix. 26. a metaphor taken from Moses, Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. From whence it appears, that this ceremony, as well as other rites of Moses's law, had a spiritual signification implied in them. Accordingly the apostles make moral applications of several branches of the ceremonial law. (See Acts x. 14. 28. Rom. ii. 28, 29. 1 Cor. ix. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Colos. ii. 11.) The same reasons the Jewish writers assign for several parts of the Mosaical institutions, particularly Philo, and Josephus, Antiq. lib. iv. cap. 8. and lib. ii. contra Appion.

Ver. 5, 6. *Blow ye the trumpet in the land,* &c.] The prophet here begins a new discourse, and describes the dreadful preparations for war, such as *blowing a trumpet,* and *setting up a standard,* for the assembling men together, in order to their leaving the open country, and retiring with their families and goods into the defended cities, both for their own safety, and that they might maintain those garrisons against the power of the enemy.

Ver. 7. *A lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the gentiles is on his way.*] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, (compare v. 6.) whose monarchy is represented by a lion, Dan. vii. 4. He is called here the *destroyer of the gentiles,* or rather *nations;* Judea and all the neighbouring countries being given up into his hands by God's decree. (See xxv. 9. xxvii. 6.)

Ver. 9. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the prince.*] Great calamities often deprive men of their wonted courage, and that presence of mind which is necessary for the due management of their affairs; and sometimes a Divine infatuation accompanies God's other judgments. (See Isa. xix. 11, 12.) The verb *abad* which is translated *perish,* does likewise signify to grow *foolish* or *stupid;* so it is taken, Deut. xxxii. 28. And the word still retains that signification in the Ethiopic language, as Ludolphus observes, in his Commentary in Historiam Ethiop. lib. i. n. 106.

The priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.] Who have both agreed to make the people believe that none of these calamities should come upon them. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 10. *Surely thou hast greatly deceived this people.*] *i. e.* Thou hast suffered them to be greatly deceived by their false prophets. (See the note on Isa. lxiii. 17.) These pretenders to prophecy studied only to speak pleasing things to the people, and soothe them up in their impenitency and carnal security; and thou hast in thy just judgment given them up to follow these delusions. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.)

Ver. 11. *A dry wind.*] The same with a *destroying wind,* li. 1. a hot pestilential wind, as the Arabic translates it in that place, which destroys great multitudes in a moment, as travellers relate. (See Dr. Prideaux, ad an. A. C. 710.) The prophet describes the Chaldean armies invading Judea, under the metaphor of a dry parching wind, which blasts the fruits of the earth, withers the leaves upon the trees, and makes every thing look naked and bare.

Of the high places in the wilderness.] The word *sephajim,* here translated *high places,* sometimes signifies valleys or plains. (See the note on vii. 29.) In which sense it is fitly joined with the *wilderness,* which word is sometimes used for a plain or champaigne country. (See the note on ix. 10. xii. 12.)

Ver. 12. *Even a full wind from those places.*] A strong wind, such as the drying east, or north winds, which come over large plains or deserts, commonly are. (See the same metaphor applied to enemies and destroyers, xlix. 36. li. 1. Isa. xxvii. 8. Ezek. xvii. 10. xix. 12. Hos. xiii. 15.)

Shall come unto me.] At my commandment. (Compare Matt. viii. 9.) The winds, storms, and other meteors, are said to fulfil God's word, and attend upon his commands. (See Psal. cxlviii. 8. Job xxxviii. 35.)

Now also will I give sentence against them.] Or, *utter my*

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judgments against them, as the phrase is translated, i. 16. (See the note there.)

Ver. 13. *Behold, he shall come up as clouds.*] As clouds of a sudden overspread the face of the sky.

And his chariots shall be as a whirlwind.] For their swiftness, and the destruction they make. (Compare Isa. v. 28.)

His horses are swifter than eagles.] Moses threatened the Jews, that for their disobedience God would bring an enemy against them *as swift as the eagle flieth,* Deut. xxviii. 49. (Compare Lam. iv. 19. Hos. viii. 1. Habak. i. 8.)

Ver. 15. *For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from Mount Ephraim.*] The rumour of the enemy's approach is heard first from Dan, which, being the most northern part of Judea, was first of all invaded. (See viii. 16.) And the evil tidings still increase, as the army marcheth forward towards Jerusalem, by the way of Mount Ephraim.

Ver. 16. *Make ye mention among the nations.*] Publish it far and near.

That watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.] The use of scouts or watchers is to warn men of the approach of the enemy. (See vi. 17.) But here the prophet by way of irony calls the Chaldean army by that name, whose business it would be to beleaguer the cities of Judah, and take care that nobody should escape out of their hands. And as the watchmen use to lift up their voice, to give notice of approaching danger; so these should make a great noise, but it should be to encourage one another to fall on their adversaries, and subdue whatever opposes them.

From a far country.] See v. 15.

Ver. 18. *This is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.*] These are the bitter effects of thine obstinacy in wickedness, which, like a deadly wound, or disease, toucheth the very heart and seat of life.

Ver. 19. 20. *My bowels, my bowels,* &c.] The prophet in very moving expressions sympathizes with the afflictions of his country, which he foresees will be the seat of war, and utterly ruined by a hostile invasion. (Compare Lam. i. 20. Isa. xxii. 4.)

Ver. 20. *Suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.*] That is, their cities and houses, in allusion to the ancient way of dwelling in tents. (Compare x. 20. Isa. xxxiii. 20. liv. 2.) The expressions may withal imply, that fortified towns can no more resist the progress of the enemy, than if they were so many shepherds' huts. (Compare Isa. xxxviii. 12.)

Ver. 21. *How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?*] See ver. 5, 6.

Ver. 22. *They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*] They have studied all the arts of sin and wickedness, but are perfect strangers to the obligations of religion and virtue; and they never shew any quickness of thought, but when they are contriving to bring about some ill design.

Ver. 23—26. *I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void,* &c.] The whole face of nature looks dismal; the inhabitants of the land and their houses, together with the fruits of the earth, are destroyed by the war; the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, are consumed by the famine: (compare vii. 20. ix. 10. xii. 4. xiv. 2, &c. Hos. iv. 3.) so that the country looks as if it were reduced to its primitive chaos. (Compare Gen. i. 2.) The heavens are covered with darkness, and the mountains tremble at the wrath of the Almighty. The prophets often describe God's judgments upon a land or nation, as if the whole frame of nature were in a state of dissolution, because these particular judgments are an earnest of the general judgment. (See Isa. v. 25. 30. xiii. 10. with the notes upon those places.)

Ver. 27. *Yet will I not make a full end.*] In the severest judgments God brings upon his people, he still reserves a remnant, to whom he will make good his promises: (see xxx. 11. xlvi. 28.) or the words may be understood to this sense: Though I make the whole land desolate by sword and famine, yet still I have severer judgments in reserve: (compare v. 10. 18.) *viz.* the destruction of the city and temple, and the captivity of the people that outlive the former calamities. The former sense of the words may be confirmed, by comparing them with that passage, 1 Sam. iii. 12. *When I begin, I will also make an end; i. e.* I will make a thorough destruction, and pursue Eli's family with judgments, till I have utterly consumed it.

Ver. 28. *For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens be black.*] See ver. 23, 24.

Because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, &c.] God's purpose of delivering up the Jews into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar was irreversible, upon the supposition that the greatest part of them would continue impenitent, which he likewise foresaw. (See ver. 22. of this chapter, and vii. 16. 27, 28. xiii. 14. xiv. 11, 12. xxv. 9—11.) Though elsewhere, upon their repentance, to which God frequently exhorted them by his prophets, (see xxv. 4, 5.) he promises the removal of his judgments. (See ver. 14. of this chapter, and vii. 3. xvii. 25. xviii. 11. xxii. 4. xxvi. 3. xxxvi. 3.) Herein Jeremy's preaching was very different from that of the false prophets, who preached peace and safety to the people, without interposing the condition of repentance and reformation. (See ver. 10. of this chapter, and xiv. 13. xxviii. 3, 4.)

Ver. 29. *They shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks.*] To save their lives. (Compare Isa. ii. 10. 19. 1 Sam. xiii. 6.)

Ver. 30. *Though thou rendest thy face with painting.*] The Hebrew reads, *Though thou rendest thine eyes with painting.* The use of their paint was to contract the eyelids, and make the eyes appear more large and full, which they thought a great beauty. (See Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxxiii. cap. 6.)

In vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers shall despise thee, they shall seek thy life.] The verse represents the people of the Jews, under the metaphor of a woman that sought, by the finery of her dress, and other allurements, to procure men's kindness, but all in vain. So should it be with them; all the arts they had made use of to engage the Egyptians, or other foreigners, to assist them against the Chaldeans, should stand them in no stead; nay, those very allies of theirs would join with their enemies. (Compare ii. 13. 18. 25. 36. xvii. 5. xxii. 20. 22. Lam. i. 2. 19. iv. 17.)

Ver. 31. *For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish, as of her that bringeth forth her first*

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child, &c.] Here Jerusalem is very pathetically described by the character of a woman under the pangs of her first child-birth, when her pains as well as her fears are greatest: such, saith the prophet, is the anguish of Jerusalem, bewailing the loss of her children, by the devouring sword of the Chaldeans, and in vain imploring comfort and assistance. *To spread out the hands,* is a gesture of begging or importuning. (See Isa. i. 15. lxv. 2. Lam. i. 17.)

The voice of the daughter of Zion.] *The daughter of Zion,* or of *Jerusalem,* is the same with *Zion* or *Jerusalem.* (See vi. 2. 23. Lam. i. 6. ii. 1.) So the *daughter of my people* is to be understood, ver. 11. of this chapter, and the *daughter of Babylon,* Psal. cxxxvii. 8. Cities and countries are commonly represented as mothers, and their inhabitants as their children.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains a vehement expostulation with the Jews, for the manifold corruption of their manners, and the disorders both of their civil and ecclesiastical government. And as a punishment for all these enormities, God threatens the invasion of the Chaldeans.

Ver. 1. *RUN ye to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem—and seek in the broad places thereof* [the streets of the greatest concourse], *if ye can find a man,* &c.] The prophet describes a general corruption of manners in much the same terms with those of the Psalmist, *There is none that doeth good, no not one,* (Psal. xiv. 3.) And yet the same Psalm afterward mentions *the generation of the righteous,* and those *who made the Lord their refuge,* ver. 5, 6. So that we may reasonably in both places understand the expressions, as only denoting the great scarcity of good men. (Compare viii. 6.)

And I will pardon it.] I will pardon the wicked for the sake of the righteous, if there be any number of the latter. (See Gen. xviii. 26, &c.)

Ver. 2. *And though they say, The Lord liveth; yet surely they swear falsely.*] Even those that do not swear by false gods, (as many among them do; see ver. 7.) yet will venture to call the true God to bear witness to what is not true. A sign that even the professors of the true religion have no inward sense of it.

Ver. 3. *O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?*] Thou searchest the hearts, and clearly discernest men's real dispositions from their hypocritical pretences, and therefore art perfectly acquainted with the obstinacy and stubborn temper of this people.

Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved, &c.] All those heavy judgments thou hast brought upon them, have not wrought in them any true remorse for their sins, nor engaged them to amend their evil ways. (See ii. 30.)

Ver. 4. *Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish,* &c.] I thought at first, saith the prophet, that such an unconcernedness for the duties of religion could be only charged upon the rude and ignorant vulgar, who have neither leisure nor opportunity of learning their duty.

Ver. 5. *I will get me to the great men, and speak unto them,* &c.] One might expect from men of better education a truer sense of religion. But, alas! the great men of the world bid open defiance to God's laws, and cast off all obligations of duty and conscience; like headstrong oxen, that will not be brought under the yoke, but break through any bonds whereby you would restrain them, or bring them under discipline. (Compare vii. 24. 26.)

Ver. 6. *Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them,* &c.] He compares their enemies to beasts of prey. (See ii. 15. iv. 7. Isa. xv. 9. Nahum ii. 11—13. Habak. i. 8.)

Ver. 7. *How shall I pardon thee for this?*] God appeals to themselves, whether they can think it consistent with his justice, to let such enormous offences as these go unpunished?

Thy children [see ii. 30.] *have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods.*] Compare Deut. xxxii. 21. Swearing is a solemn act of religion, and an appeal to God's power, justice, and truth. (See iv. 2.) So that to give such an honour to idols, is to rob God of his essential attributes. For this reason the Jews were strictly enjoined, *not to make mention of the names of false gods,* that they might not be tempted to swear by them. (See Exod. xxiii. 13. Josh. xxiii. 7. Psal. xvi. 4.)

Ver. 7, 8. *When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery—they were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.*] They abused the plenty which God gave them, thereby *making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Expositors are very much divided in explaining two words of the Hebrew text here, *mejuzzanim* or *muzanim* (for the word is differently read), translated *fed;* and *mashkim,* rendered by our translators, *in the morning:* but the sense they give of the whole verse is much the same. I shall therefore refer the curious reader to the critical remarks upon those two words, which may be found in Pool's Synopsis.

Ver. 9. *Shall I not visit for these things?* &c.] Do not such crimes as these deserve some remarkable judgments as their punishment? (See ver. 7.)

Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?] God's anger and vengeance signify in Scripture the execution of his justice; the effects of which are as terrible against obstinate sinners, as if they proceeded from the highest resentment. (Compare xliv. 22. Ezek. v. 13. vi. 9. and see the note upon Isa. xxx. 27.)

Ver. 10. *Go ye up upon her walls,* &c.] God gives a commission to the Chaldeans to besiege and take Jerusalem. The sins it hath been guilty of make him disown the relation he formerly did bear to it, and he now declares, that he hath put it out of his protection, and delivered it up to the will of its enemies.

But make not a full end.] See ver. 18.

Ver. 11. *For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me.*] See the note on iii. 20.

Ver. 12. *They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us,* &c.] They have spoken unjustly and dishonourably of God, denying his government over human affairs; ascribing his judgments to chance or fortune, and disbelieving all threatenings of sword and famine, which the prophets have denounced in his name, which is in effect to give him the lie. (See xiv. 13.)

Ver. 13. *And the prophets shall become wind,* &c.] They encourage the people to despise God's messages by his prophets, telling them that the prophets and their words

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are no better than wind and vanity, and that their prophecies, being nothing but their own imaginations, shall return upon their own heads, and they shall feel the judgments themselves which they threaten to others.

Ver. 14. *Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.*] The effect of those threatenings which are denounced by thy mouth, shall be as speedy and certain as that of fire is when put to dry wood. To the same sense are those words of Hosea, (vi. 5.) *I have hewed them by my prophets.* Thus Christ is described as having *a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth,* (Rev. i. 16.) because the judgments he denounces against the wicked are like the sentence of a judge, which is certainly followed with execution.

Ver. 15. *I bring upon you a nation from far.*] Babylon is called *a far country,* Isa. xxxix. 3. Perhaps it is called a far country here, in comparison of the Philistines, Moabites, Amorites, and other borderers, who before were the Jews' oppressors.

The words *house of Israel* are, after the captivity of the ten tribes, applied to the two tribes remaining. (See vi. 9. ix. 26. x. 1. Ezek. xiii. 5. xviii. 31.)

It is an ancient nation.] Babylon was built about a hundred years after the flood: and in a little time after Nimrod erected a kingdom there: whereupon that country is called *the land of Nimrod,* Micah v. 6.

A nation whose language thou knowest not, &c.] Another part of that judgment denounced Deut. xxviii. 49. This is a great aggravation of the miseries of a foreign conquest, that there is no parleying or treating with such a conqueror, nor moving him to compassion, because they understand not each other's language. The common people among the Jews before the captivity did not understand the Chaldee tongue, called by them the *Syrian language.* (See 2 Kings xviii. 26.)

Ver. 16. *Their quiver is an open sepulchre.*] All their arrows shall do execution, so that their quiver may be looked upon as a common grave to their enemies.

Ver. 17. *And they shall eat up thy harvest, and thy bread.*] *Bread* is here put for bread-corn; and so it is used, Isa. xxviii. 28. xxx. 23.

Ver. 18. *Nevertheless, in those days, I will not make a full end with you.*] Or, *yet even in those days,* &c. *i. e.* I have still some judgments in reserve, *viz.* the destruction of your city and temple, and the carrying away the remainder of the nation captive to Babylon. (See iv. 27.)

Ver. 19. *And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doth the Lord our God all those things unto us?*] Those that fall under the severity of God's judgments are apt to think so favourably of themselves, as to wonder why they should be singled out for examples of the Divine vengeance, and of terror to others. And particularly the Jews thought this severe proceeding scarce consistent with those many gracious promises God had made unto their nation.

Then thou shalt answer them, &c.] As much as to say, All God's promises were made upon condition of your obedience, and if you forsake God, you are not to expect that the promise of dwelling in this land should be made good to you any longer.

Ver. 21. *Which have eyes and see not; which have ears and hear not.*] Who make no use of the senses and understanding which God hath given them. (See Isa. vi. 9.)

Ver. 22. *Which have placed the sand for a bound to the sea by a perpetual decree,* &c.] The keeping the waters within bounds, so that they cannot overflow the earth, is often mentioned in Scripture, as an immediate effect of God's overruling power and providence. (See Job xxxviii. 10, 11. Psal. xxxiii. 7. civ. 9. Prov. viii. 29.) For water being *specifically* lighter than earth, by the common laws of gravitation, it should rise above it and overflow it. And then the adjusting the proportion of the tides, that they rise no higher to the prejudice of the lower grounds, is another remarkable instance of God's especial providence.

Ver. 24. *Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain.*] The vicissitude of seasons, of cold and heat, of drought and moisture, so wisely fitted for the growth of the fruits of the earth, and other uses of human life, is such a proof of a God and providence, as is obvious to the meanest capacity: upon which account it is frequently insisted on by the holy writers. (See Psal. cxlvii. 8. Matt. v. 45. Acts xiv. 17.)

Both the former and the latter rain in its season.] The former rain came just after sowing time, to make the seed take root: the latter rain was just before harvest, to plump and fill the ears, called the *latter rain in the first month,* Joel ii. 23. at which time the harvest began. (See Deut. xvi. 9.)

Ver. 25. *Your iniquities have turned away these things,* &c.] See iii. 3.

Ver. 26. *They lay wait as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.*] They use all the arts of fraud and cozenage, whereby they may overreach others, and make a prey of them and their substance. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 28. *They overpass the deeds of the wicked.*] They exceed the common instances of injustice and oppression, and make no conscience of enriching themselves with the spoils of the fatherless, and those who have most need of their charity and kindness.

Ver. 29. *Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord.*] The sins of oppression are commonly called crying sins; such as cry to heaven for vengeance against those that are guilty of them. (See Mal. iii. 5. James v. 4.)

Ver. 31. *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means,* &c.] Both priests and prophets agree to speak pleasing things to the people, thereby to keep up their interest and authority with them; and what can this end in, but a total corruption of manners? the consequence of which must be utter ruin and destruction.

CHAP. VI.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet encourageth the Chaldeans to come up and besiege Jerusalem, as a place abandoned by God for its incorrigibleness, and given up to the will of its enemies.

Ver. 1. *O YE children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of Jerusalem.*] That you may avoid the miseries of a siege. Part of Jerusalem stood in the tribe of Benjamin. (See the note on i. 1.) The prophet here applies himself to the Benjamites, as living himself in that tribe.

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Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem.] The design of those signals of war is to assemble men together, in order to their mutual defence; but it is in vain to attempt any such matter, and therefore the only use that can be made of them, is to give notice to the people, that they should disperse themselves, and fly from the approaching enemy. Beth-haccerem was a village between Jerusalem and Tekoa, as St. Jerome informs us in his commentary upon this place. The name of this village is mentioned Nehem. iii. 14.

For evil appeareth out of the north.] See i. 14.

Ver. 2. *I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.*] Some render the verse thus: *I have likened the daughter of Zion to a pasture* [so the word *navah* is rendered, Joel i. 19. ii. 22.] *and a pleasant habitation.* And the words that follow (ver. 3.) favour this interpretation.

Ver. 3. *The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her.*] The prophet having likened Zion to a rich pasture in the foregoing verse, saith, that the shepherds and their flocks shall take possession of her, meaning the Chaldean generals, (for in that sense *shepherds* are sometimes understood; see xxv. 34.) and their armies, who should feed upon her, till they had quite devoured her. So the Chaldee paraphrase explains *shepherds with their flocks*, by *kings with their armies.*

Ver. 4. *Prepare ye war against her.*] God, by his prophet, gives a commission to the Chaldeans to fight against Jerusalem. (Compare li. 27. Joel iii. 9.) The Hebrew reads, *sanctify war;* concerning which expression, see the note on Isa. xiii. 3.

Arise, and let us go up at noon.] The expressions denote the alacrity of the soldiers, and how ready they were to assault her openly at noon-day: (compare xv. 8.) or even in the heat of the day, which was a time of rest and intermission of labour in those hot countries. (See 2 Sam. iv. 5.)

Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

Ver. 5. *Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.*] The soldiers are described as so eagerly bent upon taking the city, that they express their regret for the loss of one day, that they could not arrive soon enough the first day of their approach to besiege it. Whereupon they resolve to lose no farther time, but march immediately, and take the advantage of the night to surprise its fortresses.

Ver. 6. *For thus hath the Lord of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem,* &c.] This siege is carried on by God's decree and command, as a just punishment for the oppressions and other crying sins the inhabitants are guilty of.

Ver. 7. *Violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds.*] I hear the continual complaints of those that groan under the oppression that they suffer, and are put to death unjustly and cruelly. (Compare Psal. lv. 9—11.)

Ver. 8. *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee,* &c.] Take warning by the many threatenings and judgments I have denounced against thee; amend thy ways and doings, lest, if thou persist in thy wickedness, my mind and affection be utterly alienated from thee, (see Ezek. xxiii. 17, 18. Hos. ix. 12.) and I cast of all bowels of compassion towards thee, and give thee up to ruin and desolation. This threatening God fulfilled afterward, when he suffered the city and nation to be utterly ruined and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; but it still received a farther completion, in that final desolation brought upon them by the Romans, under Titus Vespasian.

Ver. 9. *They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine,* &c.] A comparison elsewhere used, to express the entire riddance that is made in a city or country by hostile depredations. (See Isa. xvii. 6. xxiv. 13.) And as a grape-gatherer, when he thought he had done his work, afterward spies more bunches, and gathers them into his basket; so they that come after shall make an entire riddance of what was left by the former invaders, till at last there shall be nothing at all remaining. (Compare xlix. 9.)

Ver. 10. *Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken.*] As the ear, when it is stopped up with filth, cannot hear; so their minds are so prepossessed by their lusts, that the word of God can find no admittance. Men's hearts, their lips, and their ears, are said to be *uncircumcised,* when they are not duly disposed for hearing the truth. (Compare iv. 4. ix. 26.) And while men continue in this condition, they cannot give due attention to what God speaks to them. In the same sense Christ saith to the Jews, *How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?* (John v. 44.) meaning, that such a temper was an obstacle to their believing on him, and hindered them from *receiving the truth in the love of it.*

Behold, the word of the Lord is to them a reproach.] The subject of their scorn and derision. (See xx. 8.)

Ver. 11. *Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in.*] This mocking of God's messengers, and despising his word, is a great aggravation of their sins, and withal a sign that they are now grown incorrigible; so that I now feel myself *pressed in spirit,* and under a constraint of denouncing God's judgments against all orders and ranks of men, both young and old, women and children.

Therefore I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the young men together.] The prophets are said to do things, when they declare God's purpose of doing them, as hath been observed upon i. 10. In the same sense the prophet is here said to *pour out* the Divine *fury upon* the *children abroad,* who take delight in playing in the streets: (see Zech. viii. 5.) and the *young men who assemble* in meetings for diversion or conversation. (Compare ix. 21.)

The aged with him that is full of days.] *Full of days* denotes one that hath lived to the full term and period of human life. (Compare Isa. lxv. 20.)

Ver. 12. *And their houses shall be turned to others, with their fields and wives together.*] According to that threatening denounced by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 30.

Ver. 13. *From the prophet to the priest, every one dealeth falsely.*] Or, *both prophet and priest.* (Compare ix. 10.) So in other places, where the Hebrew reads, *from small to great;* our translation renders it, *both small and great.* (See 1 Sam. v. 9. xxx. 2.)

Ver. 14. *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly,* &c.] Instead of making a deep search into the corruptions of the people, the true cause of all their maladies, [compare Isa. i. 6.] and applying corrosive me-

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dicines, *i. e.* sharp reproofs, which might give them a true sense of the danger of their condition, they have used only lenitives; as if a surgeon should slightly skin over a sore that festers underneath, by preaching such doctrines as might soothe them up in their sins, and their carnal security. (See iv. 10. v. 12. 31. xiv. 13. xxiii. 14. 17. xxviii. 2, 3. Lam. ii. 14.)

Ver. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?* &c.] Nothing is a greater sign of an incorrigible temper than being past shame. (Compare iii. 3. viii. 12.)

Ver. 16. *Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,* &c.] Do like travellers, when they are at a loss which way they must go: in like manner do ye inquire what way the patriarchs of old, the judges, the kings, and prophets, of former times walked in: imitate their practices, wherein you will find true comfort and satisfaction, and not the late devices of your princes and prophets, whereby you have been seduced into error, and betrayed into many mischiefs. (Compare xviii. 15.)

Ver. 17. *Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken unto the voice of the trumpet.*] You had not fell into these dangers if you had hearkened to the prophets I sent to you, (see xxv. 4.) as so many watchmen, to warn you of the evils that threatened you. (Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 7.) They faithfully discharged their duty, and gave you loud warnings of your sins, and the judgments they would bring upon you. (See Isa. lviii. 1.)

Ver. 18. *Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation,* &c.] God appeals to all men and summons them to assemble themselves, (compare Psal. vii. 11.) and hear what he hath to lay to the charge of his people. (See Isa. i. 2.)

Ver. 20. *To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba.*] Sheba was a part of Arabia Felix, and famous for its spices and perfumes. (See Isa. lx. 6.) The prophet reproves the hypocrisy of the Jews, whereby they sought to cover their inward corruption by the external shows of religion; which the prophets often declare to be of no value, when they do not proceed from a devout mind. (See vii. 21, 22. Isa. i. 11.)

We may apply to the same purpose a story which Plato relates in his second Alcibiades, where he treats of prayer, or the worship of God: "The Athenians (he tells us), in their wars with the Lacedemonians, having received many defeats, sent a messenger to the oracle of Jupiter Hammon, to ask the reason, why they, who had erected so many temples to the gods, and honoured them with so many oblations and sacrifices, should be less successful than the Lacedemonians, who fell much short of them in these particulars? The oracle returned this answer: *I am better pleased with the prayer of the Lacedemonians than with all the oblations of the Greeks.* Now the prayer they made use of was a short petition, in which they begged the gods to give them all good things so long as they continued virtuous."

And the sweet cane from a far country?] See the note upon Isa. xliii. 24. *A far country* seems equivalent with Sheba beforementioned, whose queen is said to have *come from the uttermost parts of the earth,* Matt. xii. 42. (See the note upon Isa. v. 26.)

Ver. 21. *I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people.*] Whatever attempts they make to deliver themselves from the evils which threaten them, I will cause their designs to miscarry, and they shall fall into those very snares which they sought to avoid.

Ver. 22. *A people cometh from the north country.*] See i. 14, 15.

And a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.] Or, *from the coasts of the earth,* as the phrase is translated, l. 41. To the same sense the Chaldeans are said to come *from a far country,* v. 15.

Ver. 23. *Their voice roareth like the sea.*] Compare Isa. v. 30. Hostile invasions are fitly compared to great inundations, that carry all before them, and lay a country waste. (See Isa. xvii. 12. Dan. ix. 26.)

And they ride upon horses.] Of which there was a great scarcity in Judea; which made the Jews enter into alliances with Egypt, that they might be furnished with horses from thence. (See Isa. xxx. 16. xxxi. 1.)

Ver. 26. *Gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes.*] See iii. 25. iv. 8. Micah i. 10.

Ver. 27. *I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people.*] The sense would be plainer, if the words were translated thus, *I have set thee* (in) *a watch-tower, and* (in) *a fortress,* &c. (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 171.) God tells the prophet that he hath placed him as a watchman in a high tower or fortress, (see ver. 17.) to take an account of the people's behaviour, and to warn them accordingly.

Ver. 28. *They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders.*] See ix. 3, &c.

They are brass and iron, &c.] They are no better than dross in comparison of purer metals. (See Ezek. xxii. 18.) Their impudence resembles brass, and their obstinacy may be compared to iron: (compare Isa. xlviii. 4.) and being hardened in wickedness themselves, they make it their business to corrupt others.

Ver. 29. *The bellows are burnt,* &c.] All the means that can be used to purge this people of their dross prove ineffectual; the wicked are not separated from the righteous. Therefore your city shall be as one common furnace, wherein you shall be melted down all together. (See Ezek. xxii. 19, &c.)

The lead is consumed in the fire.] Before the use of quicksilver was known, they made use of lead for the refining their metals.

Ver. 30. *Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.*] As base money is refused by every one, because it cannot bear the touchstone, so shall these hypocrites and evil-doers be rejected both by God and man; for none of their actions will bear the test of God's laws, or abide his severe trial. The word ἀδόκιμος, signifies a *reprobate* in the New Testament, in allusion to this place; and in pursuance of the same metaphor, God's laws and judgments are often compared to a refiner's fire. (See Prov. xvii. 3. Isa. i. 25. Zech. xiii. 9. Mal. iii. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 7.)

CHAP. VII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet reproves the Jews' vain confidence in their temple, and the external observances of religion, when, at the same time, they rejected God's messages by the

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prophets, and defiled themselves with the worst sorts of idolatry.

Ver. 2. *STAND in the gate of the Lord's house.*] This most commentators understand of the east gate of the temple, which led directly up to it. (See xix. 2.)

Ver. 4. *The temple of the Lord, are these.*] As much as to say, God hath placed his name here, (ver. 10.) and chose these stately buildings as the place of his peculiar residence, and what reason is there to believe that he will ever forsake it, and give it up to be destroyed by strangers and idolaters? (Compare xviii. 18. Micah iii. 11.)

Ver. 8. *Behold, ye trust in lying words.*] Uttered by your false prophets, who foretell peace, and soothe you up in your impenitency. (See iv. 10. xiv. 13, 14.)

Ver. 9. *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery,* &c.] The prophet does not charge them with the transgression of the ritual ordinances of Moses, but with the breach of the weightier matters of the law. Thus the prophets shewed men a more excellent way of serving God, than by relying upon external performances, and thereby prepared their minds for the reception of the gospel.

Ver. 10. *And come and stand before me in this house.*] That is, in the courts before this house. (See the note on xxvi. 7.) Their making no scruple to come into God's immediate presence, with the defilements of their sins upon them, implied, that they thought the greatest sins, and even the worship of idols, consistent with the worship and service of the true God. (Compare Ezek. xxiii. 37—39.)

And say, We are delivered to do all these abominations.] Will ye interpret the deliverances God hath formerly vouchsafed to you, as so many licences to commit new abominations? or, do you think when you offer your propitiatory sacrifices, that they will wipe away the guilt of all your past offences, and ye may securely renew your former ill practices, having such a certain and easy method of obtaining pardon?

Ver. 11. *Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?*] Thus you make my house a place of sanctuary and protection to malefactors, who perform an outward service to me there, that they may continue the more securely in their sins.

Ver. 12. *But go ye now to Shiloh, where I set my name at the first,* &c.] God's ark and tabernacle were placed in Shiloh, as soon as ever the Israelites had taken possession of the promised land, (Josh. xviii. 1.) and yet I suffered the ark itself to fall into the hands of the Philistines, and quite forsook that place of my residence. (Psal. lxxviii. 60.)

Ver. 13. *I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking.*] The phrase *rising up early,* signifies diligence and assiduity. (See Isa. l. 4.) The same sense is elsewhere expressed in the Hebrew, by doing any thing *in the morning,* which our translators render *early,* Psal. xlvi. 5. xc. 14. (See likewise Psal. cxliii. 8. Isa. xxxiv. 2.)

Ver. 15. *And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole house of Ephraim.*] That is, all the ten tribes, who are often called by the name of Ephraim, that being the principal tribe among them: their first king Jeroboam being of that tribe. (See the note upon Isa. vii. 2.)

Ver. 16. *Therefore pray not thou for this people,* &c.] Nothing but a universal reformation, which God foresaw would not be effected, could deliver the Jews from that captivity and desolation which he had threatened to bring upon them. In some cases the intercessions of good men have been so far prevalent as to rescue sinners from the punishments they deserved: but here God declares nothing but a general amendment shall avert the judgments threatened. The Divine decree being without repentance irrevocable, (see iv. 28. xiv. 11, 12.) he forbids Jeremiah to interpose by his prayers for the reversing of it. But still the prophet might pray to God not to proceed to an utter destruction of his people; and accordingly we find he did pray to that effect. (See xiv. 7—9. and the notes on xvii. 25.)

Ver. 18. *To make cakes to the queen of heaven.*] As the gentiles offered to the moon, at the first appearance of the new moon, which custom Dr. Spencer proves out of Herodotus and Lucian, de Legib. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 3. The word *melecheth* may signify all the host of heaven. (Compare xix. 13.)

And to pour out drink-offerings to other gods.] They offered their meat-offerings and drink-offerings to other gods, in imitation of those which were offered to the true God. (See Numb. xxviii. 5. 7.)

Ver. 19. *Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?*] Do they think to shew their spite against me, as if they could hurt me by their wickedness? Will not their sins turn at last to their own utter confusion?

Ver. 20. *Behold, my anger—shall be poured out—upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field,* &c.] (See iv. 25, 26. ix. 10. xii. 4.)

And it shall burn, and not be quenched.] It shall make a total destruction. (Compare xv. 14. Lam. ii. 3. iv. 11. Deut. xxxii. 22. Isa. xlii. 25. Psal. lxxviii. 63. lxxxix. 46.)

Ver. 21. *Put your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat flesh.*] The burnt-offerings after they were flayed were to be consumed wholly upon the altar; (Lev. i. 9.) whereas in the sacrifices of the peace-offerings, only the fat was burnt upon the altar, the remainder belonged partly to the priest, and the rest was spent in a religious entertainment. (See Lev. ii. 29. 34. Deut. xii. 11, 12.) Here the prophet tells the Jews, they may if they please eat the flesh of their burnt-offerings, as well as of their peace-offerings, for God will accept neither of them from their hands, (see vi. 20.) and looks upon them only as common meats. (Compare Hos. viii. 13.)

Ver. 22, 23. *For I spake not to your fathers—concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice,* &c.] It is a way of speaking usual in Scripture, to express the preference that is due to one thing above another, in terms which express the rejecting of that which is less worthy; and thus I conceive we are to understand the text here, in correspondence with the parallel place of Hosea, (vi. 6.) *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* The words in both places implying, that God always laid a greater stress upon sincere obedience, than on external observances, and designed the latter, as so many mounds and fences, to guard and preserve the former. And thus much Maimonides himself grants, More Nevoch. par. iii. cap. 32. But several of the fathers infer from this text, that God never gave any command to the Jews about sacrifices, till after they had defiled themselves with idolatry, by offering sacrifices to the golden calf. (See

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Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 237. and Iren. lib. iv. cap. 29.)

Ver. 24. *And went backward, and not forward.*] The expression is taken from headstrong oxen, that draw back, and refuse to put their necks under the yoke. (See here, ver. 26. Nehem. ix. 29. Hos. iv. 16.) In the same sense the word backsliding is often applied to the Jews in this prophecy. (See iii. 6. 10. 14. 22. viii. 5.)

Ver. 26. *They did worse than their fathers.*] By setting up idols in the temple itself. (See ver. 30. 2 Kings xxi. 7. and the notes upon iii. 11.)

Ver. 29. *Cut off thy hair, O Jerusalem.*] This was commonly practised in the time of great sorrow and mourning. (See xlvii. 5. xlviii. 37. and the notes upon Isa. xv. 2.)

Take up a lamentation in high places.] See iii. 21. Lud. de Dieu observes, that the word *sephajim* sometimes signifies plains, or open places; which sense agrees very well with other texts where the word is used. (See iv. 11. xii. 12.) So the sense will be, Make the most public and solemn lamentation.

For the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.] This sinful generation, who have so highly provoked his anger. As God is said to reject or cast off his people, when he gives them up into the hands of their enemies, so he is said to choose them again at the restoration of their captivity. (See Isa. xiv. 1. Zech. i. 17. ii. 12.)

Ver. 30. *They have set up their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.*] Meaning the image and altars for idolatrous worship, which Manasseh had set up in the temple and the courts near it. (See xxiii. 11. xxxii. 34. 2 Kings xxi. 4. 7. xxiii. 4.) Which gave occasion to other profanations of the temple in after-times. (See Ezek. viii. 5, 6, &c.)

Ver. 31. *And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire.*] This unnatural custom of burning their children by way of sacrifice to Moloch, was derived from the Canaanites. (See Psal. cvi. 38.) The place where they performed this inhuman rite was called *Tophet*, from the tabrets which sounded there, to drown the cries of the children thus cruelly murdered; it is called here the *high place of Tophet*, because probably there was a temple or an altar built there to Moloch. (See the note on ii. 20.) And *the valley of the son of Hinnom*, or *the valley of Hinnom*, in the Hebrew, *Gee Hinnom*, from whence the word *Gehenna* is derived, to signify hell. The sacrifice here offered being a lively picture of hell-torments.

Which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.] On the contrary, I expressed the greatest detestation against this practice, and forbade it under the severest penalties. (Compare xxxii. 35. and Lev. xx. 1—5.) The words are spoken by the figure, called *Meiôsis*, by which a great deal more is implied than is expressed; a way of speaking frequent in Scripture. See Deut. xvii. 3. where the text, speaking of the worship of the host of heaven, adds, *which I have not commanded;* the meaning is, I expressly forbade it. So God, reproving the idolatry of the Jews, saith, *They chose things wherein I delighted not;* that is, which I utterly abhorred, (Isa. lxv. 12.) and Jeremiah (ii. 8.) calls idols *things that do not profit;* that is, whose worship is not only insignificant, but likewise extremely hurtful and dangerous. By the same figure we are to expound these expressions; *a false balance is not good,* (Prov. xx. 23.) and *to have respect of persons is not good,* (xxviii. 21.) that is, is very wicked. St. Paul expresses the vilest sins, by calling them *things which are not convenient:* (Rom. i. 28.) therefore they put a very false gloss upon this text, that would infer from it, that nothing is to be used in God's worship, but what is expressly commanded in his word.

Ver. 32. *It shall no more be called Tophet—but, the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.*] King Josiah first of all *defiled* this place, as the text speaks, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. that is, polluted it, or unconsecrated it, by burying dead bodies in it, (compare ver. 16. of that chapter.) And afterward, when great numbers died in the siege of Jerusalem, and the famine that followed upon it, it became a common burying-place of the Jews: (see xix. 6.) whereby was fulfilled that prophecy of Ezekiel, (vi. 5.) *I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols.* (Compare Lev. xxvi. 30. Ezek. vi. 4, 5. 13.)

Ver. 34. *I will cause to cease the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness.*] See the note on xvi. 9.

The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.] Men will have no encouragement to marry, when they see nothing but ruin and desolation before their eyes. (See xvi. 1—4.)

CHAP. VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet upbraids the obstinacy and incorrigibleness of the people, and bewaileth the grievous judgments which God hath pronounced against them in general, against those of a high degree, as well as such as are of a meaner condition.

Ver. 1. *AT that time, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah,* &c.] When the city shall be taken, and exposed to the rage of the Chaldean army, they shall break open the monuments of kings, princes, and great men, hoping to find some treasure there; as Josephus tells us, that immense riches were deposited in David's sepulchre by his son Solomon, which were never taken away till Hircanus's time. (See Antiq. lib. vii. cap. *ult.*)

Ver. 2. *They shall not be gathered nor buried,* &c.] The bones which shall be thus scattered about, shall not be gathered or laid up in their sepulchres. The word *asaph* is commonly used of men's being laid in the sepulchres of their ancestors, which is elsewhere expressed, by *being gathered unto their people.* In this sense it is joined with being buried here, and xxv. 33. see likewise Job xxvii. 19. Not to enjoy the common rights of burial, is spoken of as an aggravation of men's calamities. (See xxii. 19. xxxvi. 30. Eccles. vi. 3. Isa. xiv. 19, 20.)

Ver. 3. *And death shall be chosen rather than life.*] This denotes the extremity of misery: when men have no comfort left wherewith to alleviate their misfortunes, or make their life tolerable. (See Rev. ix. 6.)

Of this evil family.] See i. 15.

Ver. 4, 5. *Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away,* (compare iii. 19.) *and not return? why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?* &c.] An expostulation implying that men are seldom so

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far gone in wickedness, as not to be touched with some remorse for their evil doings, and make some general resolutions of amendment. Whereas this people are guilty of one perpetual apostacy, as if they could deceive God by their hypocritical pretences, without making any steps towards a reformation. Some explain the fourth verse to this sense: Are they so far plunged in sins and the miseries consequent thereto, that there is no hopes of their recovery out of their present ill state? If they will turn to God, will not he immediately be pacified, and return to them? According to which exposition, the verb *shûb*, which is repeated, is taken in the same sense in both parts of the latter sentence: otherwise it must be taken in two contrary senses. Taking the words in this sense, God's answer follows in the next verse, *But why then is this people*, &c. and so the particle *maduang* is to be rendered, ver. 19.

Ver. 5. *By a perpetual backsliding.*] See the note upon vii. 24.

Ver. 6. *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright.*] God is represented as *waiting that he may be gracious* to his people, (Isa. xxx. 18.) and by his *long-suffering* giving men time and space for repentance. (2 Pet. iii. 9.)

Every one turned to his course, as a horse rusheth into the battle.] Without any consideration or fear of approaching danger.

Ver. 7. *Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane*, &c.] These birds know, by natural instinct, the seasons when to return to places of their former abode: whereas this people never think of returning to God. The holy writers send men to brute creatures for instruction, thereby to upbraid their stupidity. (See Isa. i. 3. Prov. vi. 6.)

Ver. 8. *How say ye, We are wise, and the law of God is with us?* &c.] It is to no purpose to boast of your wisdom and skill in the knowledge of God's law, if you do not govern your lives by its directions; otherwise it was written and delivered to you in vain. (Compare Rom. ii. 17, &c.)

The pen of the scribe is in vain.] The title of scribe, as applied to the skill of transcribing or interpreting the law, is first given to Ezra, (Ezra vi. 6.) who was not merely a copier of the law, but likewise an explainer of the difficulties of it. (See Nehem. viii. 9. 13.) As it is likely none made it their business to write copies of the law, but those who were well versed in the study of it, which would best secure them from committing mistakes in their copies; from hence the word signifies, in the New Testament, those who were learned in explaining the law, and answering the difficulties arising, concerning the sense of it. The Greek word Γραμματεὺς, signifies a *learned man*, Ecclus. x. 5. xxxviii. 24. and is so translated by our interpreters in the latter of these two places. And the Chaldee paraphrase often interprets the Hebrew word *nabi, prophet*, by the Chaldee *saphar*, a *scribe*.

The expression in the text may relate to the answers which those who were skilful in expounding the law gave in writing, when they were consulted in any difficult case. (Compare xviii. 18.)

Ver. 9. *The wise men are dismayed, they are ashamed and taken.*] The politicians are disappointed in every enterprise they undertake; and their ill success is an evident proof, that the fear of God, and governing ourselves by his word, is the truest wisdom.

Ver. 10—12.] See vi. 12—15.

Ver. 10. *And their fields to them that shall inherit them.*] Or, *possess them;* for the word *inherit* is sometimes taken for any sort of possession. (See Psal. lxxxii. 8.) So Israel is called the Lord's *inheritance*, x. 16. and elsewhere.

Ver. 13. *There shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf shall fade.*] As both leaves and fruit wither and fade, when a tree is blasted or killed; so I will utterly deprive this people of all the blessings I had given them, those which are for use as well as those which are for ornament.

Ver. 14. *Let us enter into the defenced cities; and let us be silent there*, &c.] This seems to be spoken in the person of the people, who lived in open towns and villages, exhorting one another to repair to Jerusalem, and other fortified places, to seek for quiet and refuge there. Whereas the prophet had before (vi. 1.) exhorted the inhabitants of Jerusalem to flee even from thence. To this the prophet replies, in the following part of the verse, That God had, indeed, *put them to silence* in another sense than they meant; that is, he had taken away all their strength, and left them to be destroyed by their enemies; for so to *put to silence* often signifies: see xlvii. 5. li. 6. Isa. xv. 1. Hos. x. 7. Obad. ver. 5. where the word is rendered *cut off*, in our Bibles.

And hath given us water of gall to drink.] A bitter cup means a severe judgment; which is often expressed by the *cup of God's wrath*, or *displeasure*. (See xxv. 15. 17. ix. 15. xxiii. 15.)

Ver. 15. *We looked for peace.*] We were willing to believe the false prophets, who foretold prosperous times. (See iv. 10. xiv. 13.)

Ver. 16. *The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan.*] The Chaldean army marched into Judea through the tribe of Dan. (See iv. 25.)

The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones.] *Abbirau*, which is here translated *strong ones*, signifies *horses* in several places: (see xlvii. 3. Judg. v. 22.) and so it is understood here by the LXX.

Ver. 17. *For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed.*] Such enemies as you shall not be able to soften by any entreaties you can use. It is a received opinion, and that attested by many travellers, and other writers, that there are methods of charming venomous creatures, that they shall not bite nor hurt those that come near them. The expression here alludes to that tradition, as the words of the Psalmist do, Psal. lviii. 5.

Ver. 18. *When I would comfort myself against sorrow*, &c.] When I would apply comfort to myself, my heart misgives me, I find great reason for my fears, and none for my hopes.

Ver. 19. *The voice of the cry of the daughter of my people, because of them that dwell in a far country.*] If we follow this translation, the words must be understood of the Jews lamenting their condition, because of the Chaldeans that were coming from a far country, to invade and destroy them. But I think the words may be rendered more agreeably to the Hebrew thus, *The voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land afar off.* [Compare Isa. xxxiii. 17. where the phrase in the original is the same.] So that the prophet represents the doleful complaints of the Jews, under a state of captivity, as if God had quite forsaken and

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disowned them. To which he makes this reply, in the following words, *Why then*, or *But why, have ye provoked me*, &c. (Compare ver. 5. of this chapter.)

Ver. 20. *The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved.*] Another complaint of the people, that the summer, the season for marching an army, is past, and yet there is no prospect of assistance from Egypt, or any other of our allies.

Ver. 21. *For the hurt of the daughter of my people, I am hurt.*] See iv. 19. ix. 1. The words in the original run thus, *For the breach of the daughter of my people, I am broken.* (See xiv. 17.)

I am black.] I look ghastly, as those who are dying. (Compare xiv. 2. Joel ii. 6. Nahum ii. 10.)

Ver. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead?* &c.] Gilead was famous for balm or turpentine [for that is the proper meaning of the Hebrew *tsori*], and such-like healing gums. (See xlvi. 11. Gen. xxxvii. 25.) This made a great many physicians and surgeons to resort thither. The prophet applies this metaphorically to the state of the Jews, which was all over corrupted: (compare Isa. i. 6.) and asks, whether there have been no methods used to heal these mortal wounds and distempers; or, if there have, how comes it to pass they should have so little success? implying, that God had sent his prophets, as so many spiritual physicians, and they had given the best advice: but the fault lay wholly in the patients themselves, who refused to submit to their prescriptions; so we may apply the words spoken concerning Babylon (li. 9.) to the present case: *We would have healed Babylon, but she is not*, or rather, *she would not be healed.* The words may likewise be understood of temporal deliverance, to this purpose: Is this people forsaken both of God and men, that there is no remedy left for their deliverance? (Compare xxx. 12—14.)

CHAP. IX.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet bewails the manifold sins of the Jews, especially their falsehood and deceit, and threatens God's judgments, both against them and their neighbouring countries. He exhorts them to glory in God alone, and not in any worldly acquisitions, which they would find by sad experience to be altogether vain and unprofitable.

Ver. 1. *O THAT my head were waters,* &c.] The prophet sympathizes with the calamities of his people, as before iv. 19. viii. 21. and thereby excites them to a sense of their own misfortunes, that they may humble themselves under the mighty hand of God: according to that rule of the critic, "Si vis me flere, dolendum est Primum ipsi tibi."

Ver. 2. *For they be all adulterers.*] The expression seems here metaphorical, implying, that they were apostates from God, to whose service they were engaged by the most solemn bond and covenant. (See the notes on ii. 2. and compare Hos. vii. 4. Matt. xvi. 4. James iv. 4.)

Ver. 3. *They bend their tongue like their bow, for lies.*] So the Psalmist compares the tongue to a *bow*, and words of calumny and falsehood to arrows, Psal. lxiv. 3, 4. (See below, ver. 8. of this chapter.)

For they proceed from evil to evil.] From one degree of wickedness to a greater. (See Psal. lxix. 7.)

Ver. 5. *And weary themselves to commit iniquity.*] They take more pains to carry on their ill designs, than the practice of truth and integrity would cost them.

Ver. 6. *Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit.*] The words of God to the prophet.

Ver. 7. *Behold I will melt and try them.*] I will cast them into the furnace of affliction, that I may purify them from their dross. (See vi. 29, 30. Isa. i. 25.)

For how shall I do for the daughter of my people?] What can I do else for my people, but by all means try to save some out of the common destruction?

Ver. 9. *Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord.*] See v. 9. 29.

Ver. 10. *For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation,* &c.] The prophet laments that general desolation which he sees coming upon the whole land, which will involve all the parts of it, both high and low, in one common destruction. (Compare iv. 24—26.) The words which are translated, *The habitations of the wilderness*, the margin more properly renders, *The pastures of the wilderness.* (Compare Joel i. 19. ii. 22.) The *wilderness* sometimes signifies the plain or champaigne country, and is opposed to the mountains. (See Isa. lxiii. 13. Lam. iv. 19. Joel i. 19.)

Because they are burnt up.] Destroyed with fire and sword. (Compare Isa. xlii. 25.) Or we may understand the place of the great drought mentioned in this prophecy, xiv. 1.

Ver. 11. *I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons.*] The word *tannin*, translated here *dragons*, among several other significations, is taken for a serpent, such as are usually found in ruins and desolate places. (Compare li. 37. Psal. xliv. 19. Isa. xiii. 22. xxxiv. 13.)

Ver. 12. *Who is the wise man that may understand this?* &c.] Is there none of you so well acquainted with the will of God, and the methods of his providence, as to be able to declare the reasons, why he has given such severe instances of his anger against this land? namely, for the sins of those who inhabit it. (Compare ver. 10. and the following verses.)

Ver. 13, 14. *And the Lord saith, Because they have forsaken my law,* &c.] God himself declares the reasons of his judgments by the mouth of his prophet, *viz.* because they have forsaken his law, and followed the devices of their own hearts, and the idolatrous customs which they learned from their fathers.

Ver. 14. *After Baalim.*] See the note on ii. 23.

Ver. 15. *I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.*] I will turn their plenty into scarcity of all things. Compare this expression with that of Psal. lxxx. 5. *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them plenteousness of tears to drink;* and 1 Kings xxii. 27. *Feed him with the bread of affliction, and with water of affliction;* that is, use him with the most severe and rigorous treatment. The Hebrew word which we here translate *gall*, properly signifies an herb, growing among corn, which is as bitter as gall; it is translated *hemlock*, Hos. x. 4. and both here and elsewhere joined with wormwood. (See Deut. xxix. 18. Lam. iii. 19. Amos vi. 12.) In this last text, the word *laanah*, commonly rendered wormwood, is translated *hemlock.*

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Ver. 16. *And I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.*] A judgment mentioned by Moses, (Lev. xxvi. 33.) and fulfilled upon several of the Jewish captives in Egypt, and elsewhere. (See xliv. 27. Ezek. v. 2. 12.)

Ver. 17, 18. *Consider ye, and call for the mourning women,* &c.] Consider the evil circumstances you are in, which call for mourning and lamentation: and since you yourselves are not sufficiently affected with the dangers that threaten you, send for those women whose profession it is to make public lamentations at funerals, and upon other sorrowful occasions, and let their mournful ditties excite and stir up true sorrow in you. The prophets elsewhere allude to this practice. (See xlviii. 17. Ezek. xxviii. 31.) Particularly the custom of hiring public mourners to attend the funerals of their friends, is mentioned xxii. 18. 2 Sam. i. 24. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. Eccles. xii. 5. Matt. ix. 23. compared with Mark v. 28. Such were the *Præficæ* among the Romans.

Ver. 18. *And send for cunning women.*] Such as were *skilful in lamentation,* as Amos calls the common mourners, that were hired upon solemn occasions, (Amos v. 16.)

Ver. 19. *For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion,* &c.] The prophet instructs them to bewail their state of captivity, in these and such-like expressions.

Because we have forsaken the land; because our dwellings have cast us out.] We are forced to leave our native country: our land hath *spewed us out,* according to the expression of Moses, (Lev. xviii. 28.) and would no longer bear with our abominations.

Ver. 20. *Ye hear the word of the Lord, O ye women.*] God now speaks to the women in general, as being of more tender hearts than men, and calls them all seriously to mourning, and bids them instruct their *daughters* to join with them in a general lamentation; not only to act a part, as those who are mourners by profession.

Ver. 21. *For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces.*] Neither our houses, nor our palaces, or fortifications can defend us against our enemies: but though we barricado our doors, the soldiers, or their murdering instruments, will find a way to enter by our windows, and assault us. (Compare Joel ii. 9.)

To cut off the children from without.] See note on vi. 11. The expression is elliptical, and may be thus supplied [it proceeds] *to cut off the children,* &c.

Ver. 22. *As the handful after the harvest-man, and none shall gather them.*] We read Deut. xxiv. 19. that if a sheaf was forgot and left behind in the field, the owner should not go back to fetch it, but leave it to be taken up by the poor: this law made the harvest-men not so exact in gathering up the sheaves which they happened to drop, that they might give occasion for this sort of charity. The prophet makes use of this comparison to illustrate the number of slain that should lie about the fields, only with this difference; that whereas the poor used to gather up the sheaves left behind in the fields, these human bodies should rot upon the ground, without any one to take care of their burial. (See the note on viii. 2.)

Ver. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me,* &c.] Let not men value themselves for their wisdom, strength, or riches, which are things in themselves of a very uncertain continuance, and such calamities are coming (see ver. 25, 26.) in which they will stand the owners of them in very little stead. The only true valuable endowment is the knowledge of God, not as he is in himself, which is too high an attainment for poor mortals to pretend to, but with respect to his dealings with men; to have a serious sense of his mercies to the penitent, of his judgments to the obstinate, and of his truth and integrity, in making good his promises and threatenings to both. It is in the exercise of these attributes God chiefly delights; and it is by these he desires to make himself known to the world; and he that forms an apprehension of God, chiefly with regard to these his perfections, will always demean himself suitable towards him. Judgment and righteousness are often equivalent terms; but if we distinguish them here, judgment denotes God's severity against the wicked, and righteousness his truth or holiness.

Ver. 25. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish the circumcised with the uncircumcised.*] Or, *with the uncircumcision,* as it is in the Hebrew: so the Greek Ἀκροβυστία is used by St. Paul for the persons who are uncircumcised. (See Rom. ii. 26, 27. iii. 30. Gal. ii. 7. Col. iii. 11.) Because the Jews valued themselves so much upon their circumcision; God tells them, when he sends his judgments abroad in the world, they shall find no more favour than those who are not circumcised.

Ver. 26. *Egypt, and Judah, and Edom,* &c.] See these judgments denounced more at large, xxv. 18, &c. The prophet places Judah among the heathen nations, because they were in effect uncircumcised as well as they; contenting themselves with the outward sign of circumcision, without endeavouring after the inward purity signified by it.

And all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness.] The marginal reading is to be preferred before that of the text, *They that have the corners of their hair polled.* (Compare xxv. 23, 24. xlix. 32.) The expression denotes those Arabians who cut their hair upon the forepart of the head round, and let the hair behind grow long; which custom of theirs, Herodotus mentions in his Thalia, chap. 8. and tells us they did it in imitation of Bacchus. Others take notice that the Saracens used the same fashion in wearing their hair, dedicating it to Saturn. Plutarch saith, in the life of Theseus, that he cut his hair after the same manner, when he consecrated it to Apollo. In allusion to the same custom, the Solymæi, a colony of Phœnicians, are called Τροχοκούραδες, roundheads, in Chœrilius, ap. Joseph. lib. i. contr. App. and the Abantes in Homer, Iliad. β. ὄπιθεν κομόωντες, *wearing their hair growing behind.* And it is probable, that that precept in Lev. xix. 27. *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads,* hath reference to this custom, which was a rite in several countries near Judea, whereby they devoted themselves to the worship of some false god.

For all these nations are uncircumcised, and the house of Israel is uncircumcised in their heart.] The Israelites, by breaking God's law, have made their *circumcision become uncircumcision,* as St. Paul speaks, (Rom. ii. 25.) while they retain only the outward sign, and neglect the inward purity signified by it. (Rom. ii. 29. see iv. 4. of this prophecy.)

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CHAP. X.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet arms the Jews against the idolatry of the Chaldeans, among whom they were to live during the captivity, by setting forth the vast disparity between the true God and idols: then he bewails the calamities which were coming upon them, and beseeches God not to deal with them according to the utmost rigour of his justice.

Ver. 1. *O HOUSE of Israel.*] See the note on v. 15.

Ver. 2. *Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not afraid at the signs of heaven.*] Do not follow the fond opinions of the heathen, amongst whom ye are to sojourn during the time of your captivity. Both the Chaldeans and Egyptians were famous for their skill in astrology. The prophet therefore warns the Jews, that when they were to live among those people, they should not regard the predictions which they made from the appearances of the heavenly bodies, from whose different aspects they pretend to foretell wars, the death of great men, and other calamities; whereby they terrified the people with the apprehension of impending evils.

Ver. 3, 4. *One cutteth the tree out of the forest,* &c.] He exposeth the folly of men's worshipping the works of their own hands, by the same arguments which are made use of by Isaiah, xliv. 10, 11. and have been explained in the notes upon that place.

Ver. 5. *They are upright as the palm-tree, but speak not.*] The Hebrew may more properly be rendered thus, *They are made with due proportion, like a pillar;* the word *tomar* is rendered *pillar* by our translators, Cant. iii. 6. Joel ii. 30. They make a pretty figure, when they are set up, as being put together by the rules of art, but cannot speak, or shew any signs of sense. Images are elsewhere called *dumb idols.* (See Habak. ii. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 2.)

They cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.] See the note upon Isa. xli. 23.

Ver. 7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain.*] Or, *to thee doth honour belong.* The Hebrew word *yaatha,* is rather a noun than a verb, and signifies honour and excellency. To the same sense the Chaldee translates the words, *For thine is the kingdom.* Some critics suppose the word *Jah,* the name of God, not to be a contradiction of Jehovah; but to be derived from the same root *Yaah,* and to import the superlative excellency of the Divine Majesty.

Forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.] The princes and great men among the heathens, who were remarkable for their wisdom, and understanding the arts of government, were commonly deified after their death, and had Divine honours paid to them, as heroes, or Baalim; (see note on ii. 23.) but none of these can be compared with the supreme God. (See Psal. lxxxix. 6.)

Ver. 8. *But they are altogether brutish and foolish; the stock is a doctrine of vanities.*] *They that make images are like unto them,* saith the Psalmist, (Psal. cxv. 8.) equally stupid and insensible. The use and worship of them is grounded upon a false and foolish opinion, and tends to confirm the ignorant in that absurd fancy, that God is like the work of men's hands, and that images have some Divine power lodged within them. For the same reason an image is called *a teacher of lies,* Habak. ii. 18.

Ver. 9. *Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish.*] Ships of Tarshish sometimes signify any trading or merchant ships. But Tarshish may probably here denote some port in Spain, whither the merchants of Tyre and Zidon trafficked. (See the note on Isa. ii. 16. xxiii. 1.)

And gold from Uphaz.] Bochart supposes Uphaz to be the same with Ophir in India, near Zeilan; a place famous for gold. (See the note on Isa. xiii. 12.) Uphaz is probably the same place which is called *Paz* in Job xxviii. 17. where our translation reads, *Jewels of fine gold,* but it is in the Hebrew, *Jewels of Paz.*

Blue and purple are their clothing.] See Baruch vi. 12. 72.

Ver. 10. *He is the living God.*] Images are dead and senseless things. (See ver. 14.) Whereas God is the author and fountain of life and understanding, and we all live in and by him. The present copies of the Septuagint are defective here; but the learned Dr. Grabe conjectures, that the Septuagint anciently read here, Θεὸς ζώντων, *the God of the living,* which is still read in Theodotion's translation, and followed by the Syriac and Arabic versions; and that our Saviour alludes to this place, when he saith, (Matt. xxii. 32.) *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* (See his Dissert. de vitiis LXX. Interpretum, p. 44.)

Ver. 11. *Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens.*] This verse is writ in Chaldee, as if the prophet designed to put these words in the mouths of the Jews, wherewith they might make a public profession of their own faith in the true God, and be able to answer the heathens that would entice them to idolatry.

Even they shall perish from the earth, &c.] The prophet foretells, that there shall be a final period put to idolatry. (See ver. 15. Isa. ii. 18. xlv. 16. Zech. xiii. 2.) God hath already blotted out the names of many of the heathen idols, as an earnest of the utter destruction of the remainders of idolatry in his due time.

Ver. 12, 13. *He hath made the earth by his power,* &c.] Here follows a noble and lofty description of God's power and providence, whereby he sets forth his pre-eminence above dead and senseless idols.

Ver. 13. *When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens,* &c.] When God giveth the word of command, and signifies his will and pleasure: (compare Job xxxviii. 34.) or when he sends his thunder, called in Scripture the *voice of God,* the clouds immediately fall down in abundance of rain, and that moisture coming upon the ground that was scorched with heat before, does not only cool and refresh it, but makes all vegetables grow and flourish in it: and as God causes the vapours to ascend up in clouds from every quarter of the earth, so he joins two contrary things together, ordaining great flashes of lightning to break forth with the rain: the moisture of the rain preventing the ill effects that might otherwise proceed from the scorching heat of the lightning.

And bringeth the winds out of his treasures.] He causeth great and mighty winds to come from unknown places and causes, as if he brought them out of a hidden treasure or

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repository, where they had been laid up till he had occasion for them.

Ver. 14. *Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image.*] The founders or makers of idols may be convinced of their sottishness, by their own art or skill, who must needs know, what material idols are made of, and that they are perfectly without life or sense. (Compare Isa. xliv. 9. 11. 18—20.) The former part of the verse may be thus rendered, *Every man is brutish for want of knowledge:* thus the particle *min* is taken, xlviii. 45. Psal. cix. 24. Lam. iv. 9. where our old translation rightly renders the words, *My strength is dried up for want of fatness.*

For the molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.] They pretend to life and understanding, when they have none. (See ver. 8.)

Ver. 15. *They are vanity.*] See Isa. xli. 24. 29. [*and the work of errors.*] The making of them is owing to men's wrong notions concerning the nature of God. (See ver. 8.)

In the time of their visitation they shall perish.] The time will come when God shall execute his vengeance upon them, and destroy them utterly. (See ver. 11.)

Ver. 16. *The Portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance.*] There is no comparison between senseless idols and the great Creator of all things, who has chosen the posterity of Jacob for his peculiar people; [compare Deut. xxxii. 9. Psal. lxxiv. 2.] and has promised to be their God: [see xi. 4.] and that they should always have an interest in his favour, if they continued steadfast in their obedience to him. (See Psal. xvi. 5. lxxiii. 26. cxix. 57. Lam. iii. 24.) *The rod of his inheritance,* is an expression taken from the first division of the land of Canaan, when the inheritance of each tribe and family was meted out with a line or a rod.

Ver. 17. *Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.*] The prophet here returns to his former denunciations against Jerusalem, and warns her to move her effects, and prepare for her going into captivity; (compare Ezek. xii. 3.) for though she thought herself secure, as dwelling in a place of great strength, and well fortified, yet her enemies should prevail and take it.

Ver. 18. *Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of this land at this once.*] I will at one stroke remove the whole body of this people out of their native country. (Compare 1 Sam. xxv. 29.)

And I will distress them, that they may find it so.] Or, That they may find my threatenings to be true.

Ver. 19. *Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous.*] The prophet sympathizes with the calamities of his people; as iv. 19. viii. 24. ix. 1.

But I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.] But then I endeavoured to compose myself, and patiently submit to God's afflicting hand.

Ver. 20. *My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken.*] The prophet personates his country, as bewailing herself in the following words. My cities and houses are rifled and destroyed, as if they were so many shepherds' tents. (See the note on iv. 20.)

My children are gone forth of me, and are not, &c.] My inhabitants are gone into captivity, and will never return hither any more; so that they are the same to me as if they were dead: nor will they ever be able to contribute to the restoration of my former state.

Ver. 21. *For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord,* &c.] The prophet pursues the foregoing metaphor, and saith, that the reason why the tents are destroyed is, because the shepherds, meaning the governors, both civil and ecclesiastical, [see the note on ii. 8.] have, like so many brute beasts, forgotten God, and their duty to him; [compare Psal. xciv. 8.] and thereby engaged the people committed to their charge in idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, which hath ended in ruin to themselves and their flocks.

Ver. 22. *Behold, the noise of the bruit is come,* &c.] See vi. 22. ix. 11.

Ver. 23. *I know, O Lord, that the way of a man is not in himself,* &c.] Success does not depend upon human endeavours, but upon God's good pleasure: [compare Psal. xxxvii. 23. Prov. xx. 24.] and therefore thou canst easily disappoint all the designs of our enemies.

Ver. 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment,* &c.] If thou art determined to punish us, let it be with moderation: (see xxx. 11.) not with such a degree of severity, as utterly to destroy and consume us. (See Psal. vi. 1. xxxviii. 1.)

Ver. 25. *Pour out thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known thee,* &c.] Let thy justice be made known, by bringing an exemplary punishment upon the Chaldeans and their allies, (see i. 15.) who do not acknowledge thy providence, but ascribe all their successes to their idols.

For they have eaten up Jacob, &c.] See vi. 3.

CHAP. XI.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet proclaims the tenor of God's covenant with the Jews, and then denounceth a curse against those who break it: at the end of the chapter, he threatens evil to his neighbours at Anathoth, who had conspired his destruction.

Ver. 2. *HEAR ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah,* &c.] That is, Hear, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, the words of the covenant I made with your fathers: and do thou, Jeremiah, lay the tenor of it before them. (Compare ver. 6.) Dr. Lightfoot, in his Harmony of the Old Testament, is of opinion, that the prophet puts the people in mind of the renewal of this covenant lately made in the time of Josiah, (2 Kings xxiii. 3.)

Ver. 3. *Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant.*] It is a way of speaking usual in Scripture, to denounce God's judgments in the form of imprecation: so the apostle pronounces an excommunication, by saying, *Let him be accursed,* or *anathema,* (Gal. i. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) To the same sense, St. Paul saith of Alexander the coppersmith, *The Lord reward him according to his works,* (2 Tim. iv. 14.) Thus the imprecations we meet with in several Psalms, are to be understood as so many predictions, or denunciations, of God's judgments. Accordingly, St. Peter, speaking of the hundred and ninth Psalm, saith, That in it the Holy Ghost *spake before* [or prophesied] *by the mouth of David concerning Judas,* (Acts i. 16.)

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Ver. 4. *Out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace.*] The use of an iron furnace is to melt and purify metals, and is a proper representation of any sore affliction, wherein God tries his servants, in order to purge them of their dross. (See Gen. xv. 17. Psal. lxvi. 10. Isa. xlviii. 10. and ix. 7. of this prophecy.)

Saying, Obey my voice.] See vii. 23.

Ver. 5. *Then answered I, and said, So be it, O Lord.*] The prophet confirms the words of this curse, according to the form prescribed, Deut. xxvii. 25, &c. and thereby approves the justice of it.

Ver. 9, 10. *A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah—they are turned back to the iniquity of their forefathers.*] They made some steps towards a reformation in the time of Josiah, but now they have agreed or conspired together to return back to their former idolatries. (Compare Ezek. xxii. 25. Hos. vi. 9.)

Ver. 11. *Though they should cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.*] Their destruction was irreversible, upon supposition of their continuance in their evil ways, which God foresaw they would do. (See the notes upon iv. 28. vii. 16.)

Ver. 12. *Then shall the cities of Judah—go and cry unto the gods to whom they offer incense,* &c.] When great calamities threaten men, their fears suggest all possible ways of seeking for succour: and when they find themselves forsaken of God, they betake themselves to idols: but will find all applications vain, and to no purpose. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.)

Ver. 13. *For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah.*] See ii. 28.

Have ye set up altars to that shameful thing—unto Baal?] *Bosheth, shame,* was a nickname for *Baal.* (See Hos. ix. 10.) So, *Jerubbaal* is called *Jerubbesheth,* 2 Sam. xi. 21. (See the note on Isa. xix. 18.)

Ver. 14. *Therefore pray thou not for this people,* &c.] See vii. 16. xiv. 11, 12.

Ver. 15. *What hath my beloved to do in my house, seeing she hath committed lewdness with many.*] Why doth this my chosen and peculiar people, as they love to call themselves, make their appearance before me in my house, since they have gone a whoring after several idols of the nations round about them, and thereby have disowned me, and broken the marriage-contract, or covenant, that was between us? (See the note on ii. 2. and compare xiii. 27.) God calls the Jews his beloved people, because they called themselves so, and because they were still *beloved for their fathers' sakes,* (Rom. xi. 28.) and he would not cast them off utterly, for the sake of the covenant he had made with their progenitors. (See xii. 7. Hos. iii. 1.)

The holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.] The flesh of thy sacrifices which thou offerest up to me, as an atonement for thy sins, doth not at all profit thee, being polluted and rendered unacceptable to me, through those many and great sins, in which thou continuest without remorse, and even takest a pride in committing them. (See above, vi. 20. and compare Hag. ii. 12—14.)

The LXX. and Vulgar Latin give a more easy sense of this verse, *Why hath my beloved committed lewdness in my house? can vows or the holy flesh take away thine iniquities from thee?* It is probable that the Hebrew copy they made use of, instead of *harabbim* [*with many*] read *hanedubim,* or *haneddarim; free-will-offerings,* or *vows.*

Ver. 16. *The Lord hath called thy name, A green olive-tree, fair, and of goodly fruit.*] St. Paul plainly alludes to this verse, Rom. xi. 17. where, speaking of the gentiles being made members of the church in the room of the Jews, who were rejected, he saith, *If some of the branches are broken off, and thou* [gentile], *being a wild olive-tree, art grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.* The Jewish nation, in its flourishing state, is sometimes compared to a vine, sometimes to an olive-tree, chiefly because of the fruits of good works which God might justly expect from them, after all the care and pains he had bestowed upon them, to make them thrive and fructify. (See Psal. lii. 8.)

With the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches thereof are broken.] In pursuance of the same metaphor, the words express the desolation which the Chaldeans should bring upon Judea by fire and sword. (Ezek. xix. 14. Isa. xvi. 8.)

Ver. 17. *For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee.*] See the note on ii. 21.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord hath given me knowledge of it,* &c.] This relates to the ill designs the men of Anathoth had contrived against the prophet, which he saith God had revealed to him. (See the following verses.)

Ver. 19. *But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter.*] A proverbial speech, expressing a false security or insensibility of danger. (See Prov. vii. 22.) So Agamemnon's ghost in Homer describes his own death treacherously contrived by Egisthus at a feast.

———ὣς τίς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνῃ·
Ὡς ἄνον οἰκτίστῳ θανάτῳ.———

He died as an ox at the stall.
Odyss. λ. ver. 410.

That phrase, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,* Isa. liii. 7. is of a different importance. (See the note there.) Bochart supposes the word *alluph* to be an adjective, and renders the former part of the sentence thus, *I was brought as a tame sheep to the slaughter.* But we may very well admit of the common translation; the disjunctive particle being elsewhere understood, as Psal. lxix. 31. *Better than an ox* [or] *bullock,* (Isa. xxxviii. 14.) *Like a crane* [or] *swallow.*

Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof.] The letter of the Hebrew runs thus, *Let us destroy the tree* (or the stalk) *with the bread thereof:* (bread is sometimes used for the corn, of which it is made, v. 17.) *i. e.* Let us destroy the prophet and his doctrine. (See ver. 21.) Lud. de Dieu renders it, *Let us destroy the wood in his flesh; i. e.* Let us scourge him with rods, till they are broke, and the ends of them stick in his flesh. I take this to be a forced interpretation: for the Hebrew *lehem, bread,* is never put for flesh, but when it is spoken of the sacrifices offered up to God. The Septuagint render the words, *Let us put wood into his bread, i. e.* Let us give him wood instead of bread; which the fathers generally apply to the crucifixion of Christ, whose sufferings were typified in the afflictions of all the saints and prophets of former times.

Ver. 20. *But, O Lord—that judgest righteously, that*

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triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause.] I have laid my cause before thee, and recommended myself to thy protection, who knowest the sincerity and intentions of my thoughts. (See xii. 2, 3.) When men continue implacable in their malice, we may lawfully expect and desire that God will plead our cause, and judge us according to our righteousness. For the bringing wicked men to condign punishment, tends both to the manifestation of God's glory, and the good government of the world. To pray against our enemies in this sense, *viz.* not for the satisfying our private resentments, but the setting forth of God's justice, is not disagreeable to the spirit of Christianity. So St. Paul prays against Alexander, *The Lord reward him according to his works,* (2 Tim. iv. 14.)

Ver. 21. *Prophesy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hands.*] This was the usage the prophets commonly met with from those who *became their enemies; because they told them those truths* they had no mind to hear. (See xx. 1. xxxviii. 4. 6. Amos vii. 10.) And this treatment they found at the hands of their neighbours, their friends, and relations: (see xii. 6. xx. 10.) as our Saviour Christ did afterward. (See Matt. xiii. 57. John vii. 15.)

Ver. 22. *The young men shall die by the sword,* &c.] I will make good Jeremiah's prophecies, and bring those evils upon them which he hath foretold.

Ver. 23. *The year of their visitation.*] When I will visit their sins upon them. (See xxiii. 12. xlvi. 21. xlviii. 44. l. 27.) The words *year* and *day* often signify a set or determined time. (See Isa. lxi. 2.)

CHAP. XII.

ARGUMENT.

The six first verses relate to the subject spoken of in the latter part of the eleventh chapter, and should not have been divided from it. In the remaining part of this chapter God declares, *That although he had forsaken his people for* a season, and given them up into the hands of their enemies, yet he would in due time remember them, and execute vengeance upon their oppressors.

Ver. 1. *RIGHTEOUS art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments.*] Though I doubt not of thy justice and holiness, yet suffer me to argue with thee concerning the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous: a dispensation which hath in all ages been made an objection against Providence, and upon that account been a stumbling-block even to good men. (See Job xii. 6. xxi. 7, &c. Psal. xxxvii. lxxiii.)

Ver. 2. *Thou art near to their mouth, and far from their reins.*] The true character of hypocrites, who, according to the prophet Isaiah's description of them, *Honour God with their mouth, but their heart is far from him,* (Isa. xxix. 13. Mark vii. 6.) The *reins* in Scripture signify the thoughts and inward dispositions. (See Prov. xxiii. 16. Psal. xvi. 7. lxxiii. 21.) In which sense God is said to *try the reins and the heart,* xi. 20. of this prophecy.

Ver. 3. *Pull them out as sheep for the slaughter.*] As sheep are taken out of the flock, in order to be slain. (See the note on xi. 20.) The Vulgar Latin reads, *Gather them as sheep;* it is probable that the verb *natak* might be used in this sense, though the lexicons take no notice of it; for *attik,* a noun derived from thence, signifies a *chamber,* (Ezek. xli. 15.) and *netek* a *spot* of leprosy, (Lev. xiii. 30.) from the gathering of the humours.

Prepare them for the day of slaughter.] The Hebrew reads, *Sanctify them; i. e.* set them apart for destruction. (See xxii. 7.)

Ver. 4. *How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither?* &c.] The famine hath already consumed the fruits of the earth, together with the birds and beasts of the field, for the infidelity and atheism of these wretches, who thus prosper in their wickedness. (Compare xiv. 2. xxiii. 10. ix. 10.)

Because they said, He shall not see our last end.] The words of those who made a mock of Jeremiah and his prophecies, as if he should never see those evils come to pass which he had threatened against them, (xi. 23.) Some understand the words to this sense, God will never bring that destruction upon us, with which Jeremiah threatens us.

Ver. 5. *If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?*] Here God answers the complaints of the prophet, and applies a proverbial expression to his case; the import of which is, that if men find themselves unable to contend with a less power, it is in vain for them to strive with a greater. This sentence being applied to the prophet's case, implies, that if he could not bear with the ill usage of his acquaintance and neighbours at Anathoth, how would he be able to undergo the hardships he must expect to meet with from the great men at Jerusalem, who would unanimously set themselves against him? (See xxvi. 8, &c. xxxvi. 26. xxxviii. 4. 6.)

And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?] The same sense differently expressed; *q. d.* If thou enduredst such hardships in thy own country, and among thy own kindred and acquaintance, what must thou expect when those in power shall combine against thee? whose rage shall be like that of the lions who are driven out of their coverts, when Jordan overflows the neighbouring fields, and set upon every one that travels the public road. (See the note on xlix. 19.)

Ver. 6. *They have called a multitude after thee.*] Or, *against thee,* as Noldius observes the particle *ahareé* sometimes signifies. (See xlix. 37. Isa. xxxvii. 22.) They have not been content to vent their own malice against thee, but have also raised the multitude upon thee, and endeavoured to bring thee under a popular odium: the words may perhaps be more properly translated, *They pursue thee with a great* [cry], as a common malefactor.

Ver. 7. *I have forsaken my house.*] The place of my especial residence, where I have placed my name. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 27.) The words are spoken of the desolation of the temple by the Chaldeans, as if it were already brought to pass; a way of speaking usual in the prophets. (See the note upon Isa. xxi. 9.)

I have given the dearly-beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies.] See xi. 15.

Ver. 8. *Mine heritage is to me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore I have hated it.*] My people have used me and my prophets with despite and con-

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tempt. They have blasphemed me and my laws, just like a wild beast, that opens his mouth against every one that withstands it. These are just causes of my hatred to them.

Ver. 9. *Mine heritage is to me as a speckled bird; all the birds round about her are against her,* &c.] My people are become wild and savage, (see ver. 8.) and not to be taught better manners, and, like a speckled or taloned bird, are only fit for prey and deeds of violence. And as all the rest of the birds flock about such a one, and are ready to pull it to pieces; so I have stirred up all the enemies of my people, to annoy them on every side; compared here to so many beasts of prey. (See ii. 15. Isa. lvi. 9. Habak. ii. 17.) The word *tsabûang,* rendered here *speckled,* is of an uncertain signification, being found but in this one place of the Bible, unless perhaps 1 Sam. xiii. 18. where some look upon it as a proper name. The Septuagint understand it of the *hyena,* which sense is followed by Bochart. But if we take it in either signification, the sense is much the same.

Ver. 10. *Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard.*] By *many pastors* are meant the generals of the Chaldean army, so the Chaldean paraphrase rightly explains it. (See ver. 12. and compare vi. 3.) God calls Judea his *vineyard* and *pleasant portion,* because of the care he took to cultivate and improve it, and the fruit he might justly have expected from it. (See the note on xi. 16.)

Ver. 11. *Being desolate it mourneth unto me.*] It lies in a neglected and doleful condition; (see ver. 4. and xxiii. 10.) and makes a sort of a silent complaint, and begs to be restored to its former prosperity.

The whole land is desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.] No man acknowledgeth God's hand in the calamities he feels, or humbles himself under it. (See viii. 6. Isa. xlii. 25.)

Ver. 12. *The spoilers are come upon all high places through* [or in] *the wilderness.*] The Chaldean army, described by the metaphor of a *full wind of the high places in the wilderness,* iv. 11. (See the note there.)

For the sword of the Lord shall devour from one end of the land to the other end of the land.] When God delivers up a people to be slain by their enemies, he is said to give commission to a sword to pass through a land. (See xlvii. 6, 7. Ezek. xiv. 17.)

Ver. 13. *They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns.*] A proverbial expression, signifying men's loss of time and labour. It is here applied to the Jews' fruitless endeavours to save themselves from the evils that threatened them, by courting the assistance and alliance of idolaters.

And they shall be ashamed of your revenues, because of the fierce anger of the Lord.] Or, *Be ye ashamed of your increase,* &c. God's displeasure shall make all your designs abortive; they shall not bring forth their expected fruit, and you shall be seized with shame and confusion to see yourselves disappointed. (Compare ii. 36, 37.) The word *revenues,* or *increase,* alludes to the *reaping of thorns,* mentioned in the foregoing part of the verse.

Ver. 14. *Thus saith the Lord against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land.*] This prophecy threatens chiefly the Idumeans, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, against whom Jeremiah prophesies, chap. xlvii.—xlix. and Ezekiel, chap. xxv. These the text calls *evil neighbours,* because of the spite and ill-will which they shewed towards the Jews upon all occasions, at this time especially, when most of them joined with the Chaldeans and Syrians, in oppressing them. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 2.) This sin is particularly laid to their charge by the prophets, and they are threatened with captivity chiefly upon that account. (See xlix. 1, 2. Ezek. xxv. 3. 6. 8. 12. 15. Amos i. 11. Obad. ver 10. Zeph. ii. 8.)

And pluck the house of Judah from among them.] Several Jews were carried captive, or turned voluntary exiles, into these neighbouring countries, before the general captivity by the Chaldeans. (See xv. 4. xl. 11.) Of these Jews some were translated together with the natives of those countries by the Chaldeans afterward: others went down into Egypt. (See chap. xliii. xliv.) Here is foretold the restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions. (Compare xxxii. 37. Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26.) This promise was partly made good in the times succeeding the Babylonish captivity: (see Psal. cxlvii. 2.) but will more fully be accomplished at the final restoration of that nation, concerning which see xxx. 3, &c. when the fulness of the gentiles will likewise be brought into the church, which the words of the next verse point at.

Ver. 15. *And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and have compassion on them,* &c.] Or, *I will again have compassion on them:* the verb *shûb* being often taken adverbially. (See the note on Isa. vi. 13.) The captivity threatened to the Jews and their neighbours seems to be confined to the space of seventy years. (See xxv. 11. xxvii. 7. Isa. xxiii. 15.) We may observe likewise, that after Jeremiah hath threatened severe judgments upon several countries, he concludes with a general promise of returning from their captivity *in the latter days:* (see xlviii. 47. xlix. 6. 39.) which promise probably relates to their conversion under the gospel, called in Scripture *the latter days.*

Ver. 16. *If they will diligently learn the ways of my people.*] If they will learn of my people, who lived among them, to be worshippers of the true God.

To swear by my name.] See the note on iv. 2.

As they taught my people to swear by Baal.] See Zeph. i. 5. As all vice is contagious, it is no wonder to find the Jews particularly fond of the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. For which cause they are often cautioned not to follow their customs; and it is probable several of the ceremonial laws were made in opposition to the usages received among those nations.

Then they shall be built in the midst of my people.] They shall be joined to them as one church, which is called God's *house,* or *building.* (See Numb. xii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 9. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5.)

Ver. 17. *But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation.*] Those that will not have God and Christ to reign over them, shall in the end be punished with everlasting destruction. (See Isa. lx. 12. Luke xix. 27. compared with Rev. xix. 21.)

CHAP. XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Under the figures of a linen girdle, and bottles filled with wine, is set forth God's rejection of the Jews, and the

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severe judgments he would execute upon them for their manifold sins.

Ver. 1. *GET thee a linen girdle, and put it on thy loins.*] See this figure explained, ver. 11.

And put it not in water.] To represent the Jews in their corrupt state of nature, when they had nothing to recommend them to God's grace and favour. (Compare Ezek. xvi. 4.)

Ver. 4. *Arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.*] God commanded the prophet to hide the girdle by the bank of Euphrates, to signify the Jews being carried captive over that river, called the *water of Babylon*, Psal. cxxxvii. 1. Most commentators are of opinion, that this was performed by the prophet only in a vision: it not being probable that God should send him two such long journeys as are mentioned here and ver. 6. merely upon this errand. (See a like instance, xxv. 17.) Several things are related in Scripture as actually done, which yet were only transacted in a vision; a remarkable instance of which we read, Gen. xv. 5. where the text saith, that God brought *Abraham forth abroad*, and bid him *tell the stars;* and yet it appears by ver. 12. that the sun was not gone down. See this question at large discussed by the learned Dr. Pocock, in his Commentary upon the beginning of Hosea.

Ver. 9. *After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah.*] I will bring down their pride and stubbornness, (see ver. 15. 17.) by making them slaves and vassals to strangers. (See Lam. v. 5. 8. 13.)

Ver. 11. *For as a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah.*] The covenant between God and his people is elsewhere represented by a marriage-contract; (see the note on ii. 2.) whereby the man is said to *cleave to his wife*, (Gen. ii. 24.)

That they might be to me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise.] That they might have the honour of being called by my name, and I might be glorified by their shewing forth my truth and praises to the world. (See xxxiii. 9.)

Ver. 12. *Every bottle shall be filled with wine.*] God's judgments are often represented under the figure of a cup full of intoxicating liquor. (See this metaphor at large pursued, xxv. 15, &c.) To the same purpose God tells them here, that as they have all sinned, so shall every one have his share in the punishment.

And they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?] God, that knew the profaneness of their hearts, foretells the reply they will make to this threatening, that, taking it in a literal sense, they will make a jest of it, as if the words were intended to encourage intemperance; either they did not, or would not, understand the drift of them. (See vi. 10.)

Ver. 13. *Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land —with drunkenness.*] See the note on xxv. 15, 16.

Ver. 14. *And I will dash them one against another.*] I will confound and destroy them all, as earthen vessels are broken to pieces, when they are dashed one against another. The words allude to the earthen bottles which were to be filled with wine, ver. 12. (Compare xix. 10, 11. xlviii. 12.)

I will not pity nor spare.] See iv. 28.

Ver. 15. *Be not proud.*] See ver. 9. 17. Humble yourselves before God, and give glory to him; as it follows:

Ver. 16. *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness.*] Confess your faults, (compare Josh. vii. 19.) and humble yourselves under his mighty hand, before he bring upon you the night of affliction: light is the emblem of joy, and happy times are expressed by bright and pleasant days; as, on the contrary, troubles and calamities are represented by the night and darkness, when every thing looks melancholy and dismal. (See iv. 23. xv. 9. Isa. v. 30. viii. 22. Joel ii. 10. Amos viii. 9, 10.)

And before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains.] Before the time come, when ye shall be forced to fly by night unto the mountains, for fear of your enemies. (See xvi. 16. Psal. xi. 1. Ezek. vii. 16. Matt. xxiv. 16.)

Ver. 17. *But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.*] If ye resolve to harden yourselves against those messages I deliver to you from the mouth of God, I will then lay aside my public character, and have nothing to do, but secretly to bewail your obstinacy and contempt of God's word and threatenings. (See ver. 10. 15.)

Because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.] See ver. 20.

Ver. 18. *Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down,* &c.] By the king and queen may probably be meant Jehoiachin and his mother, who was carried captive with him. (See xxii. 26. 2 Kings xxiv. 12.) The prophet tells them they must both come down from their high estate, and sit down upon the ground, or in the dust; *i. e.* in a posture of mourning and lamentation. (See Lam. ii. 20. Isa. iii. 26. xlvii. 1.)

Ver. 19. *The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them.*] *Shutting up* signifies a state of bondage, and *opening* a state of liberty. (See Psal. xxxi. 8. Job xii. 14.) The verb *sagar*, here rendered *shut up*, is sometimes taken for delivering or giving up into the power of another; and is rendered in the Septuagint, by Παραδίδωμι. (See Deut. xxiii. 15. xxxii. 30. 1 Sam. xxiii. 12. Job xvi. 11. Psal. lxxviii. 48.) Taking the words in either sense, they denote that the cities of Judah shall be given up into the enemies' hand, and none shall be able to rescue them. Judah is called the *south*, in opposition to Chaldea, expressed by the *north* in the next verse. (See i. 14.)

Ver. 20. *Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?*] The verbs and pronouns in the Hebrew here, and in the following verse, are of the feminine gender; which supposes the words to be directed to the Jewish state or government, represented under the figure of a woman. (See iv. 31. vi. 2.) The prophet demands, in a sarcastical manner, into what a miserable condition she hath brought the people committed to her charge; called the *Lord's flock*, ver. 17. which were formerly in a prosperous and flourishing condition. (Compare x. 21.)

Ver. 21. *What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?*] What wilt thou plead for thyself, either for the excusing or mitigating thy punishment?

For thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee.] When Ahaz called in the assistance of Tiglathpileser against Rezin king of Syria, and made himself tributary to the king of Assyria, he taught the Assyrians how they might become masters and conquerors over his own

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country, whenever they pleased. (See 2 Kings xvi. 7. 2 Chron. xxviii. 20.)

Ver. 22. *And if thou say in thy heart, Wherefore come these things upon me?*] See v. 19.

For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.] Thine enormous crimes deserve no less a punishment than that of captivity: when thou shalt be carried away into a strange country, stripped and bare, without any covering to thy nakedness; for such was the barbarous cruelty of conquerors towards their captives. (See Isa. xlvii. 17. xx. 4. xlvii. 3. Lam. i. 8. iv. 21. Nahum iii. 3.) The words likewise allude to the punishment that used to be inflicted upon common harlots and adulteresses, which was to strip them naked and expose them to the eyes of the world: and thus God threateneth he will deal with Jerusalem, upon account of her spiritual fornication. (See Ezek. xvi. 37—39. Hos. ii. 10.)

Ver. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?*] The Hebrew word *Cush*, which our translators render by *Ethiopia*, does often signify Arabia in Scripture: Ethiopia being by the ancient writers distinguished into the eastern, the same with Arabia, and western Ethiopia. (See Ludolphus's Comment. in lib. i. Histor. Æthiop. n. 19.) Bochart, indeed, maintains, that the word is never used for Ethiopia, properly so called. (See his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 2. n. 238.) But this text is a good proof to the contrary, which may most probably be understood of the Africans, or Blackmoors, as they are commonly called. The word *Cush* is likewise joined with the Lubims or Lybians, in other places, as 2 Chron. xii. 3. xvi. 8. Dan. xi. 43. and with *Phut*, another people of Africa. (See Jer. xlvi. 9. Ezek. xxx. 5. xxxviii. 5. Nahum iii. 9.) In the same sense *Cush* must be understood, Esther i. 1. where Ahasuerus is said to *reign from India to Cush*, or Ethiopia; because the words relate to the conquests of Egypt and Ethiopia by Cambyses; by whose victories, and the successful arms of Darius Hystaspes, the Persian empire was enlarged from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. (Compare that text with Dan. vi. 1.)

Then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil.] The words import, how extreme difficult it is to overcome ill habits, custom being a second nature. For we are not to explain the words in a strict literal sense (because then it would have been to no purpose for the prophet to have exhorted the people to amendment), but only extend their meaning so far as to denote that a moral change in habitual sinners is almost as impossible as a natural one. Thus our Saviour compares the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of God, to a natural impossibility, *viz. to a camel's passing through the eye of a needle:* (Matt. xix. 24.) but yet qualifies the comparison, by adding, *What is impossible with men, is possible with God, i. e.* God's grace can surmount such difficulties as are impossible for nature to overcome; and thus we are to understand the text before us.

Ver. 25. *This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me.*] Or, *of thine inheritance*, as the Chaldee paraphrase explains it; the expression is taken from the division of the land of Canaan, by line or measure.

Because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.] In false gods, who cannot help men in their troubles. (See x. 14.)

Ver. 26. *Therefore I will discover thy skirts*, &c.] See ver. 22.

Ver. 27. *I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings,* [compare v. 8.] *the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields.*] He resembles their violent inclination to idolatry to the rage of lust. (Compare ii. 20. 23, 24. iii. 2. 6.)

CHAP. XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Besides the invasion threatened, God visited the land of Judea with a terrible famine, which Jeremiah earnestly prays God to avert: and withal shews how the false prophets have deceived the people, who foretold nothing but peace and prosperity.

Ver. 1. *THE word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth.*] Or, the *drought;* so the LXX. render the word here, as also the Chaldee and Syriac versions: and thus our translators understand the word, xvii. 8. The Hebrew *batsaroth*, signifies restraint, *i. e. When the heaven is shut up that there is no rain*, as the Scriptures express it, Deut. xi. 17. 1 Kings viii. 35. This dearth was the effect of a great drought, like the famine in the time of Elijah. (See the third, fourth, and following verses.)

Ver. 2. *Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, they are black unto the ground.*] By the *gates* of Judah are meant the cities thereof: (see xv. 7. Deut. xxviii. 52.) together with their inhabitants, who have left their cities desolate, to seek out for sustenance. The people look black and ghastly, and cast themselves down upon the ground, out of grief and despair. (Compare viii. 21. xiii. 18.)

And the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.] Is gone up to heaven. (See 1 Sam. v. 12.)

Ver. 3. *The nobles have sent their little ones to the waters, they came to the pits.*] Or, *to the cisterns:* Jerusalem was supplied with water by two lakes or pools, called the *upper pool*, and the *lower pool;* (see Isa. vii. 3. xxii. 9.) from whence the water was conveyed in cisterns for the use of the city.

They were ashamed and confounded.] At the disappointment. So we are to understand the same expression in Psal. xl. 14. lxx. 3. *Let them be ashamed and confounded; i. e.* Let them meet with that confusion which follows a disappointment. (Compare xx. 11. xlviii. 13. of this prophecy.)

They covered their heads.] An expression of great affliction and mourning. (See 2 Sam. xv. 30. xix. 4.)

Ver. 5. *Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it.*] To seek for sustenance somewhere else.

Ver. 6. *The wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind as dragons.*] They gaped after the cool air upon the tops of the mountains, and drew it in greedily with their mouths, as naturalists observe of dragons and great serpents in hot and dry seasons. But the word *tannin* likewise signifies any great fish: (see the note on Isa. xxvii. 1.) and particularly a crocodile, as it is plainly taken Ezek. xxix. 3. xxxii. 2. in which sense Ludolphus understands the word here, and tells us, that the crocodiles put their heads above water, to refresh themselves by breathing in the cool air. (See his Commentary in Histor. Æth. lib. i. n. 87.)

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Ver. 7. *O Lord, though our enemies testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake.*] Our sins bear witness against us, and condemn us to the severest judgments thy wrath can inflict: but we beseech thee to consider, that we are thy people, and have that regard for thine own honour, as not to cast us off utterly. (See ver. 9.)

For our backslidings are many.] Or, *Although our backslidings are many.* (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 399.)

Ver. 8. *O the Hope of Israel.*] Thou who hast given us so many gracious promises, to encourage us to put our trust in thee. (See Psal. xxii. 4.)

Why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land? &c.] Thou hast promised to dwell among us, (see ver. 9. Lev. xxvi. 12.) why then shouldest thou behave thyself towards us, as if thou wert a mere stranger to us? and as one no more concerned for our welfare, than a traveller is for the place where he lodges but one night, and never expects to see it again?

Ver. 9. *Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save?*] Thou canst not want power to save us; but by thy disregard of us, seemest like a mighty man, that through fear or surprise, is not able to make use of his strength.

Ver. 10. *Thus saith the Lord unto his people, They have loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet.*] God returns an answer to the complaints and expostulations of the prophet, and tells the people, that their miseries are owing to themselves, who took pleasure in going astray from the true God, and following the idolatries and corrupt customs of the heathens about them: (see ii. 23—26.) which sins he now visits so severely upon them.

Therefore the Lord doth not accept them, &c.] He will not accept their own prayers or humiliations, nor thine intercessions in their behalf, but will punish them according to their deserts. (See ver. 11, 12.)

Ver. 11. *Therefore pray not for this people,* &c.] See vii. 16.

Ver. 12. *When they fast, I will not hear their cry.*] It is likely there was a public fast appointed upon occasion of this dearth, as there was, in a like case, in the prophet Joel's time. (See Joel ii. 15.) And at such times they used to make their prayers with great noise and vehemence. (Isa. lviii. 4. Joel i. 14.)

And when they offer burnt-offerings and an oblation, I will not accept them.] See vii. 20. The word *mincha,* rendered *oblation,* was the offering of fine flour, mentioned Lev. ii. 1, &c. which always accompanied their sacrifices; and is not so properly translated *meat-offering* by our interpreters; whereas it should rather be rendered a *bread-offering;* for it answers to the οὐλοχύτης, and the *mola* or *fartum* of the Greeks and Romans.

But I will consume them by the sword, &c.] See ver. 18. and xv. 2.

Ver. 13. *Behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall see the sword,* &c.] See note on iv. 10.

Ver. 14. *The prophets prophesy lies in my name,* &c.] See xxiii. 21.

Ver. 16. *And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem,* &c.] The people contributed to their own delusions, and readily hearkened to such false prophets as confirmed them in their evil ways: so God justly threatens to punish them, because they had not a love for the truth. (See 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. and iv. 10. of this prophecy.)

Ver. 17. *Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them, Let mine eyes run down with tears,* &c.] However insensible you are of your own condition, yet God commands me to bewail those calamities which I foresee are coming upon you.

For the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach.] Those cities are called virgins which never came into a conqueror's hands, as hath been observed upon Isa. xxiii. 12. In the same sense the prophet here calls Jerusalem a virgin, because she had been hitherto under God's immediate protection, and preserved by him from all the attempts of her enemies. (Compare Amos v. 2. see another sense of this phrase in the notes upon xviii. 13. xxxi. 4.)

The dissolution of a government or body politic is called a *breach,* by way of allusion to the breaking or disjointing the limbs of a human body. (See viii. 21. Lam. ii. 13.)

Ver. 18. *Both the prophet and the priest go about* [or wander] *into a land that they know not.*] The priests and prophets confirmed the people in their corruptions and impenitence, thereby seeking to advance their own interest and authority. (See ii. 8. v. 31.) To which sense the marginal reading renders the former part of the sentence thus, *The prophet and the priest make merchandise against the land.* And now they receive the due reward of their prevarications, by going into captivity with those whom they have misled. (See ver. 15.)

Ver. 19. *Hath thy soul loathed Zion?*] Which was formerly thy delight, and the place thou didst choose for thine especial residence. (See Psal. lxxvii. 68. lxxxvii. 2. cxxxii. 14.)

Ver. 20. *We acknowledge our wickedness, and the iniquities of our fathers.*] Which thou mayest justly visit upon us, as thou hast threatened, (Exod. xx. 5.) especially since we have not only imitated, but also exceeded them in wickedness. (See vii. 26. xvi. 12.)

Ver. 21. *Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory.*] Jerusalem is called the *city of God,* Psal. xlviii. 1. lxxxvii. 3. as he was in a peculiar manner king of the Jews, and this was his royal city, or chief seat of his kingdom. (See iii. 17.) But the words are chiefly to be understood of the temple, and the prophet beseeches God not to give that up to be profaned by infidels, the place which he had chosen for his peculiar residence, where he sat between the cherubims as upon a throne. (See the notes upon Isa. lxvi. 1.)

Remember [and] *break not thy covenant with us.*] Thou hast promised *to be our God,* and that *we should be thy people;* (xi. 4.) *i. e.* that thou wouldest take us under thy protection. We have indeed forfeited all our title to thy promises by our sins; yet we beseech thee still to remember the relation we bear to thee. (Compare Psal. lxxiv. 20.)

Ver. 22. *Are there any among the vanities of the gentiles that can cause rain?*] Idols are often styled *vanities.* (See x. 15. xvi. 19. Deut. xxxii. 21. Acts xiv. 15.) The giving rain in its season, is an argument for God's providence, often insisted upon in the Scriptures. (See the note on v. 24.)

Or can the heavens give showers?] Are they purely owing to natural causes? on the contrary, God directs them where and when they should fall. (See the note on x. 13.)

Art not thou he, O Lord our God [that givest them]?

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therefore we will wait upon thee.] For rain, and the supply of all other our wants. The Hebrew word *hû, he,* is often equivalent to the true or eternal God: see Deut. xxxii. 39. Isa. xliii. 10. 13. xlviii. 12. and especially Psal. cii. 27. where the expression is the same with that of the text, *atta hû, thou art he:* our English reads *thou art the same.* The words express the eternal and unchangeable nature of God. There is another text where the word is plainly taken in this sense, 2 Kings ii. 14. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah,* aph hû, *even he?* for so the words should be translated. Those translations which join that expression of the following sentence, as our English does, put a manifest force upon the syntax.

CHAP. XV.

ARGUMENT.

God declares his irrevocable purpose of bringing desolations and captivity upon the Jewish nation: and comforts Jeremiah under those discouragements, which he met with in the discharge of his prophetical office.

Ver. 1. *THOUGH Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people.*] As God had forbid Jeremiah before to intercede for them, because it would be to no purpose: (see the note on xvii. 16.) so here he declares, that he would not admit the prayers of any others, though eminent favourites of God, in their behalf. Moses obtained pardon for the people after their sin in making the golden calf; (Exod. xxxii. 34.) and again, after their despising the promised land: (Numb. xiv. 20.) Samuel's intercession prevailed for their deliverance out of the hands of the Philistines, (1 Sam. vii. 9.) And these two persons are mentioned together, as remarkably prevalent by their prayers, Psal. xcix. 8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, even when thou wast just taking vengeance upon their inventions:* for so the words should be translated. But here God saith, that if these very persons were alive, and in that near attendance to him which they formerly enjoyed, (for that is the import of the phrase, *To stand before him:* see ver. 19. xviii. 20. Deut. x. 8. 1 Kings xvii. 1.) *yet* even their prayers should not avert his judgments from this people. (Compare Ezek. xiv. 14.)

Ver. 2. *Such as are for death, to death.*] Death here signifies the pestilence, which, together with the sword and the famine, should consume the greatest part of the people. (Compare xiv. 12. Ezek. v. 12. xiv. 21.)

Ver. 3. *And I will appoint over them four kinds—the sword to slay,* &c.] These four judgments shall be the executioners of my vengeance upon this people. (Compare Lev. xxvi. 16.) Those whom the sword destroys shall not enjoy the common rites of burial, but their carcasses shall be left a prey to the dogs, the birds, and the beasts. This is mentioned as an aggravation of the Divine judgments. (Compare viii. 2.)

Ver. 4. *And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth.*] Several Jews were carried captive into other countries, besides Chaldea: (see the note on xii. 14.) others turned voluntary exiles, to avoid the miseries they saw coming upon their country. (See xl. 11.) The words here are taken out of Deut. xxviii. 25. where Moses threatens them with a general dispersion over the world, which received its utmost completion after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Because of Manasseh, &c.] His idolatry and other abominations, exceeded the wickedness of all the kings that went before him. (See 2 Kings xxi. 7. 9. 11.) In his time the public worship of God was wholly suppressed, and idolatry introduced into the very temple; the law of God was likewise quite laid aside, and in a manner forgotten, as appears by the surprise Hilkiah was in, when he found the original of the law in the house of the Lord, (2 Kings xxii. 8.) So it was Manasseh's sins that filled up the measure of the Jews' iniquities. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3, 4.)

Ver. 5. *For who shall* [or rather, who will] *have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem?*] Thy sins render thee unworthy of pity, and every body that sees the calamities brought upon thee will own them to be just. (See xxii. 8, 9.)

Or, who will turn aside to ask how thou dost?] Who will be so much concerned for thee, as to step a little out of his way to inquire after thee, a common instance of respect between persons never so little acquainted. Rather they that pass by will insult over thy calamities. (See Lam. ii. 15.)

Ver. 6. *Thou art gone backward.*] See vii. 24.

I am weary with repenting.] When God suspends the execution of his judgments, he is said to *repent* of the evil he had threatened. (See xviii. 8.) This he had done so often, that he is represented like a man whose patience is at last quite tired out, it being to no purpose to withhold his hand any longer from striking. (Compare Isa. xliii. 24. Hos. xiii. 14. Mal. ii. 17.)

Ver. 7. *I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land.*] *I will scatter them to all the winds,* as Ezekiel expresses it, Ezek. v. 12. (See likewise li. 2. of this prophecy, Isa. xli. 16.) By the *gates of the land* are meant the cities. (See xiv. 2.)

Ver. 8. *I have brought upon them, against the mother of the young men, a spoiler at noon.*] Compare vi. 4. By the *mother of young men,* is meant Jerusalem. (See Isa. l. 1. Hos. ii. 2.)

And terrors upon the city.] The Hebrew word *nir* is of a double signification: the Septuagint render the words, *tumult and terrors.* This translation of the word *nir,* Abr. à Schultens defends from the sense it still retains in the Arabic. (See his Animadver. in Job, p. 53.) Some suppose that word to signify a *watchman* here, from the Chaldee sense of it, and translate the latter part of the verse thus, *I have caused* (or will cause) *a watchman and terrors to fall upon it suddenly.*

Ver. 9. *She that hath borne seven, languisheth.*] The prophet pursueth the metaphor of the former verse, and describeth the mother-city under the figure of a fruitful woman, (compare 1 Sam. ii. 5.) but fainting away, and ready to die with grief for the loss of her children.

Her sun is gone down while it is yet day.] She is as a young man that dies in the midst of his strength: of a sudden she is overwhelmed with misery, when she might have expected a long continuance of happiness. (Compare Amos viii. 9. and see the note upon iv. 23.)

And the residue of them will I deliver to the sword.] *i. e.* Those that escape out of the city. (See ver. 8. Ezek. v. 12.)

Ver. 10. *Woe is me, my mother, thou hast born me a man*

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of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth.] Or, *land.* I am an object of the common hatred, every body takes occasion to quarrel with me, because I speak such truths as they do not care to hear. (See xi. 19, &c. xx. 7, 8.)

I have neither lent upon usury, nor men have lent to me upon usury; yet every one of them doth curse me.] The Jews were forbid to take usury of their brethren, (Deut. xxiii. 19.) especially of the poor, (Exod. xxii. 25.) which was thought so great an oppression, that it made the man who was guilty of it hated and cursed by every one. The prophet saith, this was just his own case, every body was his enemy for delivering those messages he had received from God.

Ver. 11. *The Lord saith, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant,* &c.] If we follow this translation, the sense is, that the prophet himself, his family, and relations, should escape the evils coming upon the Jewish nation, when the remnant or *residue* of them should be delivered to the sword, (ver. 9.) But others translate the sentence thus, *I will give thee a happy deliverance* [from these evils]: or, *thy habitation shall be happy,* or secure; and thine enemies shall use thee well, when they exercise all manner of cruelty towards the rest of the Jews. (See xxxix. 11, 12. xl. 4.)

Ver. 12. *Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?*] The northern iron was the hardest in its kind of any, *viz.* such as the people called *Chalybes,* living near the Euxine Sea, prepared. The words, if they are applied to Jeremy, import thus much, That as common iron cannot contend for hardness with the northern iron, or with steel: so the opposition which the Jews make against thee, shall easily be vanquished and disappointed, because *I am with thee to save thee,* (ver. 20.) If the words relate to the Jews, as the following verses plainly do; the sense is, that the Chaldeans coming from the north, (i. 15.) will be as much too hard for the Jews to engage with, as the northern iron is superior in strength to the common metal of that kind.

Ver. 13. *Thy substance and thy treasure will I give to the spoil without price.*] Compare xvii. 3. God threatens the Jews, that he will give up all their wealth and substance for a prey unto their enemies, without receiving any valuable consideration for it, without any regard to his own honour, which will be so far from being increased by it, that it will be thought to suffer in the eyes of the world, by delivering up his own people into the hands of idolaters; he will deal with them as men do with the refuse of their stock or goods, which they are glad to be rid of upon any terms. (Compare Psal. xliv. 13.)

Ver. 14. *And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not.*] Compare xiv. 18. The words may be rendered thus, *I will bring thine enemies* [who live] *in a land which thou knowest not.* The Septuagint and some other interpreters, instead of the present Hebrew reading, *heeberti,* read *heebadhti,* to this sense, *I will cause thee to serve thine enemies,* &c. as the sentence is repeated, xvii. 4.

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, &c.] See vii. 20.

Ver. 15. *O Lord, thou knowest.*] Mine innocency. (See xii. 3.)

Visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors.] See xi. 20. and the note there.

Take me not away in thy long-suffering.] Suffer not mine enemies to take away my life, while thou forbearest to vindicate and defend me. Verbs active in the Hebrew language, do often signify only *permission.* (See iv. 10. and the note upon Isa. lxiii. 17.)

Know [or consider] *that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.*] See ver. 10. xi. 21. xx. 8. Herein the prophet was a type of Christ, and his sufferings. (See Psal. lxix. 7. and the note upon xi. 19.)

Ver. 16. *Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me joy and rejoicing of my heart,* &c.] As soon as I received or understood thy word, and the messages thou didst deliver to me, I treasured them up in my memory; I meditated upon them, and did inwardly digest them. It was a pleasure to me to think I should be an instrument of conveying thy commands to my brethren, and that I should have the honour of being called thy prophet, or messenger. The receiving God's word, by which the soul is nourished, is elsewhere compared to corporal food. (See Isa. lv. 1, 2. Ezek. iii. 1. 3. Amos viii. 11. John vi. 27. Rev. x. 9.)

Ver. 17. *I sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone.*] The word *meshahakim,* here translated *mockers,* is elsewhere rendered, *Those that make merry;* (see xxx. 19. xxxi. 4.) which signification the Chaldee paraphrase follows, and, as I conceive, better suits this place; the sense of which is, That Jeremy quickly found the joy which he had conceived from the honour of being a prophet, was turned into heaviness; all his prophecies containing nothing but terrible denunciations of God's indignation against a sinful people. This makes me, saith he, sit alone, renounce all cheerful conversation, and give myself to solitariness and pensive thoughts. (Compare Lam. iii. 28.) God's judgments, as they were represented to the prophets, often raised such dreadful ideas in their mind, as to affect them in an extraordinary manner, especially if their threatenings concerned their own country, or the church of God. (See xxiii. 9. Ezek. iii. 4. Dan. vii. 28. Habak. iii. 2. 16.)

Because of thine hand.] God's *hand* may either be understood of his judgments, which, being denounced by the prophet, might be resembled to a hand stretched out, and just ready to strike: or else of the prophetical impulse, which was strong upon Jeremiah, and in a manner forced him to be the messenger of evil tidings. (Compare 2 Kings iii. 15. Isa. viii. 11. Ezek. i. 4. iii. 14.)

Ver. 18. *Wilt thou be altogether to me as a liar, and as waters that fail?*] Thou hast promised to be my defence and safeguard against mine enemies; (see i. 18, 19.) and wilt thou altogether disappoint and deceive me? like little brooks which are dried up in summer, when they are most wanted, and so disappoint the thirsty traveller. (Compare Job vi. 15.) The prophet here sets down the perplexities he laboured under, by reason of the opposition he continually met with from ungodly men, in the execution of his office: just as the Psalmist relates the misgivings of his mind, when he was under great troubles and temptations. (See Psal. xxxi. 22. lxxiii. 13, 14. lxxvii. 7. 10.) But then presently he checks such thoughts, calls to mind God's gracious promises, and encourages himself to rely upon him. And the like encouragements are recorded in the following verses of this chapter.

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Ver. 19. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou wilt return, I will bring thee again* [or restore thee], *and thou shalt stand before me.*] To these complaints of the prophet, God returns an answer, the import of which is as followeth: These misgivings of mind are a sort of renouncing the prophetical office: if thou wilt therefore return to thy duty, saith God, I will restore thee to that station thou hast in a manner deserted, and thou shalt still attend upon me, as my servant and messenger. (See the note upon ver. 1.)

And if thou wilt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.] If thou encourage the good, and reprove the wicked, thou wilt answer the character of a true prophet, whose office it is to utter the words that God puts into his mouth, without adding thereto, or diminishing from them. (See Exod. iv. 16.) Whereas the false prophets made the wicked more presumptuous, and discouraged the righteous. (See Ezek. xiii. 22. xxii. 26.) The expression alludes to that charge given to the priests, to distinguish carefully *between holy and unholy*, and *between clean and unclean*, (Lev. x. 10.)

Let them return to thee; but return not thou to them.] Do not thou comply with their humour, or study to soothe them up in their wickedness: but rather endeavour, by wholesome reproofs, to turn them from the error of their ways.

Ver. 20, 21. *And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall,* &c.] If thou wilt faithfully discharge thy duty according to these directions, I will certainly fulfil the promise I made to thee, when I first called thee to the prophetical office, (i. 18, 19.)

CHAP. XVI.

ARGUMENT.

God forbids the prophet the use of such rejoicings as were customary at marriage-festivals, and likewise the solemnities practised at funerals: intimating, that in times of the utmost distraction, such as were coming upon the Jews, all the solemn rites both of joy and mourning should cease. Yet, withal, he adds a promise to them of such a restoration, as shall be more wonderful than their deliverance out of Egypt.

Ver. 2. *THOU shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons nor daughters in this place.*] Fruitfulness was promised as a blessing under the law, (Deut. xxviii. 4.) but ceased to be so in such difficult times as were coming upon the Jewish nation: for parents could not promise to themselves any comfort in their children, who must be exposed to the many miseries that attend a hostile invasion, and a conquering army.

Ver. 4. *They shall die of grievous deaths,* &c.] By sword and by famine, as it follows. (Compare viii. 2. xv. 2, 3.)

Ver. 5. *For thus saith the Lord, Enter not into the house of mourning,* &c.] Or, *of a mourning-feast,* as the margin reads; such as were the περίδειπνα among the Greeks, and *parentalia* among the Romans. (See ver. 7.)

For I have taken away peace from this people, &c.] As they are not the object of my compassions; so neither ought they to be of the pity of others. They are to be esteemed as so many criminals or malefactors, at whose funerals men do not use to pay the common respects which are due to the deceased.

Ver. 6. *Neither shall men lament for them.*] Men's thoughts shall be wholly taken up with bewailing themselves: their own calamities shall be so great, it shall make them not concerned for the misfortunes of others.

Nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them.] See the note upon xli. 5. The law did expressly forbid making any *cuttings in the flesh* at funeral obsequies. (See Lev. xix. 28. Deut. xiv. 1.) Notwithstanding which prohibition, this practice seems to have been taken up by the Jews, among other heathenish customs. Shaving of the head was a usual expression of mourning. (See vii. 29.)

Ver. 7. *Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning,* &c.] According to this translation, the phrase alludes to another expression of immoderate grief, which consisted in tearing the flesh with their nails:

"Unguibus ora soror fœdans,"

as Virgil describes it. But, according to the marginal reading, the sense is, *Neither shall men break* [bread] *for them;* alluding to the mourning-feast mentioned ver. 5. (See likewise Ezek. xxiv. 17. Hos. ix. 4. Tobit iv. 17.)

Ver. 9. *For I will cause to cease out of this place—the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.*] In the time of a general desolation all the solemn seasons of mirth and gladness shall cease, as well public as private. The solemn feasts, which were always observed with great expressions of joy, (see Deut. xvi. 11. 14. Isa. xxx. 29.) as well as nuptial solemnities, and other private occasions of rejoicing. (Compare vii. 34. xxv. 10. Hos. ii. 11.)

Ver. 10. *Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us?*] See v. 19.

Ver. 11. *And ye have done worse than your fathers.*] See the note on vii. 26.

Ver. 12. *And there ye shall serve other gods, day and night.*] The opportunities of frequenting the public worship of the true God shall be taken from you, as a just judgment upon you for your neglect of his service in your own country; and you shall be exposed to the peril of committing idolatry; and being seduced by the Chaldeans to the worship of their idols. (Compare Deut. iv. 28. xxviii. 36. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.)

Mr. Mede expounds the words of their *serving other gods,* in a political sense; *i. e.* serving those nations who worshipped other gods. (See his Apostacy of the latter Times, par. i. b. iii. chap. 16.) The Chaldee paraphrase explains the phrase to the same purpose, *Ye shall serve those people that worship idols day and night.*

Ver. 14. *Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* &c.] The particle *laken,* translated *therefore,* sometimes signifies *nevertheless,* or *yet surely;* see the note on Isa. xxx. 18. and so it is translated v. 2. of this prophecy; which sense agrees best with the scope of this place, and connects this verse with the words foregoing. So it should be rendered likewise, xxx. 16. xxxii. 36.

Concerning the import of the promise made here and in the following verse, see the notes upon xxiii. 7, 8.

Ver. 16. *Behold, I will send for many fishers, and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them.*] Enemies and oppressors are

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elsewhere represented under the metaphors of fishers and hunters; (see Gen. x. 9. Amos iv. 2. Habak. i. 14, 15.) because they use all the methods of open force and secret wiles (frequently compared to nets) in order to make men their prey. (See Ezek. xii. 13. Hos. v. 1.) These two similitudes imply, that the Chaldeans shall make an entire conquest and booty of the whole land, of its inhabitants and their riches; and what shall escape one party, shall fall into the hands of another.

From every mountain, &c.] They shall find them out in all the places whither they flee for refuge, be they never so secret or inaccessible. (See xiii. 16.)

Ver. 18. *And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double.*] *i. e.* Double in proportion to God's usual severity in punishing men's sins. (Compare xvii. 18. Isa. xl. 2. with the note upon that place.)

Because they have defiled my land.] See ii. 7.

They have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.] With their idols, which are elsewhere called *carcasses,* not only because they are without life, but also because of their filthiness and hatefulness in the sight of God. (See Lev. xxvi. 30. Ezek. xliii. 7. 9.) Some explain the words of the human sacrifices which were offered to idols. (See xix. 5.)

Ver. 19. *O Lord, my strength and my fortress—the gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth,* &c.] The more emphatically to demonstrate the absurdity of forsaking the true God, and apostatizing to idolatry; the prophet foretells, that the time will come when the gentiles shall be ashamed of the idolatry they and their forefathers have been so long guilty of; shall humbly confess this their sin, and address themselves to the true God in all their wants, as their only refuge and protection.

Ver. 20. *Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?*] The absurdity of supposing that the work of men's hands can resemble or represent the infinite majesty of God, is often insisted upon by the holy writers. (See x. 3, &c. Isa. xliv. 10, 11, &c.)

Ver. 21. *Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know—my hand and my might,* &c.] The phrase which our English renders *this once,* may be translated, *at this time,* as it is 2 Sam. xvii. 7. If we understand the verse of the gentiles, mentioned in the foregoing verse, the sense is, that God will at the time foretold (ver. 19.) exert his power in an extraordinary manner for their conversion. (Compare Isa. lii. 10.) If we apply the words to the Jews, they import, that he will manifest his power in bringing upon them all the evils already threatened against them, and they should know that he is the Lord, a fulfiller of his threatenings, as well as a performer of his promises. (Compare Ezek. vi. 7. xii. 20. xxiv. 24. 27.) This sense the Chaldee paraphrase expresses.

CHAP. XVII.

ARGUMENT.

After having renewed his threatenings against the Jews for their sins, the prophet encourages himself, and other well-disposed persons, to put their trust in God alone. The latter part of the chapter contains a charge to the king and people for the strict observance of the sabbath.

Ver. 1. *THE sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond,* &c.] It is written in indelible characters, as when things are engraved in tables of stone, to preserve the memory of them to posterity. (Compare Job xix. 24.) In like manner the Jewish altars and other monuments of their idolatry, are undeniable tokens of the corrupt inclinations of their hearts, which are altogether estranged from God and his true worship.

Ver. 2. *Whilst their children remember their altars, and their groves,* &c.] They train up their children in the same idolatrous practices. (Compare vii. 18. ii. 20.)

Ver. 3. *O my mountain in the field.*] A periphrasis of the temple, called elsewhere the *mountain of the Lord's house,* and the *holy mountain.* (See Isa. ii. 2.) This being the principal part of Jerusalem, is put by way of synecdoche for the whole city. (Compare xxi. 13.)

I will give thy substance, &c.] See xv. 13.

Ver. 4. *And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage.*] The Hebrew verb *shamattah, discontinue,* alludes to the seventh year of *release* enjoined by Moses, (Deut. xv. 1.) which law the Jews had a long time neglected out of covetousness, and refused to observe, even after a solemn engagement to the contrary. (See below, xxxiv. 8, &c.) So here the words imply, that since they would not release their land, nor their servants in the sabbatical years, as God had enjoined them, he would release them from the possessions he had given them; and then *the land should enjoy her sabbaths,* according to the prescription of the law. (See Lev. xxvi. 34.)

For ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever.] *i. e.* Till you be consumed. (Compare vii. 20. xv. 14. xxi. 2.)

Ver. 5. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*] The prophet denounces this curse chiefly with respect to the Jews placing their trust in the assistance the Egyptians, or other their allies, would afford them against the arms of the Babylonians, which he tells them will deceive their expectation, and make them forfeit the Divine protection. (See the notes on iv. 30. xxii. 20. 22.)

And maketh flesh his arm.] By *flesh* is meant a frail mortal man. (See Isa. xxxi. 3.)

Ver. 6. *For he shall be like the heath in the desert.*] Whereas the righteous, and he that trusteth in God, shall be like a fair flourishing tree. (See ver. 8.)

In a salt land, and not inhabited.] *Saltness* in Hebrew expresses barren ground. (See Deut. xxix. 23. Psal cvii. 34. Zeph. ii. 9.)

Ver. 8. *And shall not see when heat cometh.*] Or, *shall not fear when heat cometh:* so the Septuagint render the words, following the reading of the Hebrew text, which is to be preferred before that of the margin.

And shall not be careful in the time of drought.] Shall not be solicitous for fear it should lack moisture. (See xiv. 1.)

Ver. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things,* &c.] An entire confidence in God is one of the chief trials of men's sincerity; and they that pretend to depend wholly upon him, yet in cases of apparent danger, are too apt to mistrust his promises, and have recourse to human succours. Or else the prophet here assigns a reason why we ought to put our trust in God, and not in man, whose heart we can-

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not look into, and who very often, under great pretences of sincerity, cover over mischievous designs.

Ver. 10. *I, the Lord, search the heart,* &c.] Since there are so many corrupt inclinations that lurk in the heart, it is very hard for men, without examining themselves very narrowly, to know the sincerity of their own hearts; it being the property of God alone, perfectly to discover the whole bent and frame of men's dispositions. (See Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

Ver. 11. *As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, but not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days.*] It is very uncertain what kind of bird the Hebrew word *kore* denotes. Bochart thinks the description given of it in the Arabic writers, doth by no means agree to a partridge: so that it is needless to inquire whether the quality here mentioned belong to that bird. The sentence may best be rendered thus, *As the bird kore hatcheth eggs which she did not lay: so he that getteth riches,* &c. As when eggs are hatched by a bird of a different species, when once the young ones are fledged, they never stay with the dam that hatched and nourished them: so he that increases an estate which he did not come honestly by at first, shall never prosper long with it. Critics observe, that the Hebrew verb *yalad,* translated here *hatcheth,* properly signifies *laying the eggs;* the hatching them being expressed by the verbs *bakang* and *dagar,* the word used in the text, which our translators render *sitteth on eggs,* but doth properly signify *hatching* them.

And at his end shall be a fool.] So God calls the rich man, Luke xii. 20. who was cut off in the midst of his life, when he promised himself the enjoyment of many years.

Ver. 12. *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.*] God's kingdom is from everlasting: his throne is in heaven, the place of his peculiar residence, of which his temple at Jerusalem is but an imperfect resemblance; heaven is sometimes called God's temple, or sanctuary. (See Psal. xi. 4. xviii. 6. cii. 19. Isa. lvii. 15. Jonah ii. 7.) The words instruct the Jews to look up to God in the heavens, and not fancy the temple the only place from whence they may address themselves to him, which made them think he would never forsake that seat of his residence, nor the city where he had placed his name. (See vii. 4.)

Ver. 13. *O Lord, the hope of Israel, all they that forsake thee shall be ashamed.*] Thou hast given many gracious promises to thy people, to encourage them to trust in thee; and they that forsake their interest in thy goodness, will find all other expectations fail and disappoint them.

And they that depart from me, shall be written in the earth.] They that forsake my laws, saith God, and their reliance upon me, shall not be registered among my people, nor shall their names be written in heaven, or in the book of life. (Compare Ezek. xiii. 9. Psal. lxix. 28. Luke x. 20. Philip. iv. 3.) The expression alludes to the registers that are kept of the members of every city or corporation, the privileges of which society none can pretend to, but they that have their names entered in such registers. (See Ezra ii. 59.)

Because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.] See ii. 13.

Ver. 14. *Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.*] It is from thee only that I expect comfort and relief in all my troubles and afflictions. (See ver. 15—17.) And as I acknowledge that all the blessings I enjoy come from thee, so it is to thee I return all thanks and praise. (Compare Psal. cix. 1. cxlviii. 14. Deut. x. 21.) The expression, *Save me, and I shall be saved,* is much the same with that we read, xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned:* and both of them import, that it is the Divine assistance and blessing only that can crown human endeavours with success. (See the note there.)

Ver. 15. *Behold, they say, Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now.*] This is an objection common in the mouths of infidels and libertines, that God doth not speedily fulfil his promises or threatenings, so as to give them ocular demonstration of their certainty. (See Isa. v. 19. Amos v. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 4.) This was objected against the truth of Jeremy's prophecies by the loose persons of that age.

Ver. 16. *As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woful day, thou knowest.*] The Geneva translation renders the sense better thus, *I have not thrust in myself for a pastor after thee.* The prophet solemnly appeals to God, that he did not intrude himself into this office; nor was he desirous of an employment that foreboded so much evil to others, and brought a great deal of trouble upon himself. The words in the original run literally as our translation expresses them, but the construction is the same with that expression we read, xl. 9. where the words in the Hebrew run, *Fear not from serving the Chaldeans;* but our translation rightly expresses the sense, *Fear not to serve the Chaldeans.* (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 567.)

Ver. 17. *Be not a terror to me.*] Amidst all the terrors with which mine adversaries threaten me, (see xi. 19. xv. 10.) let me still find comfort in thee; and let not any apprehension of being forsaken by thee add a new terror to the rest of my fears.

Ver. 18. *Let them be confounded,* &c.] See the note on xi. 20.

And destroy them with a double destruction.] See xvi. 18.

Ver. 19. *Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out,* &c.] In the most public gates of the city, and the common passages for king and people.

Ver. 20. *Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah.*] Compare xix. 3. The words are directed both to the king himself, and likewise to the princes, or those of the royal blood. (See ver. 25.) The word *king* in the Hebrew language signifies any person in authority. (See xxv. 20, &c. l. 41. li. 28. and the notes upon those texts.)

Ver. 21. *Bear no burden on the sabbath-day.*] See Nehem. xiii. 19. Servile work was forbidden upon their solemn festivals; (see Lev. xxiii. 8. 35.) much more upon the sabbath-day.

Ver. 22. *But hallow ye the sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers.*] The sabbath was instituted as a sign or token of God's covenant with his people; (see Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.) the observance of it was the distinguishing character of a Jew, whereby he declared himself a worshipper of the true God, who made heaven and earth, and ordained the sabbath-day as a memorial of the creation. So that the Jews profaning the sabbath, was in effect a renouncing their share in God's covenant. (See Ezek. xx. 13. 21.)

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Ver. 23. *But they made their neck stiff.*] A metaphor taken from oxen that draw back, and refuse to put their neck under the yoke. (See vii. 26. xix. 15.)

Ver. 25. *Then shall there enter into the gate of this city, kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David.*] Compare xxii. 4. From hence it appears, that the judgments denounced against Jerusalem, at least as far as they threatened the city with utter destruction, were not irreversible. And from Jeremy's advice to Zedekiah, (xxxviii. 17.) it may be concluded, that if the king had hearkened to that counsel, the city would not have been destroyed, and he himself might have continued a tributary king under Nebuchadnezzar. It is true, that in several other chapters of this prophecy, God, upon foresight of the Jews' impenitence, pronounces a peremptory sentence upon them. (See the note on iv. 28.)

Ver. 26. *From the land of Benjamin.*] See the note on i. 1. vi. 1.

And from the plain, and from the mountains.] The country of Judea, properly so called, *i. e.* the country allotted to the tribe of Judah, was divided into the hill country, (see Josh. xxi. 21. Luke i. 39.) and the plain or champaigne country; the same word is rendered *valley*, xxxii. 44. This lower part reached down to the lake Asphaltites, called the *sea of the plain*, or *the Salt Sea*, Deut. iii. 17.

And from the south.] That part of Judah which is called the *wilderness of Judea*, Matt. iii. 1. Josh. xv. 61. By reason of this situation of the wilderness, the word itself sometimes is put for the south. (See Psal. lxxv. 6.)

Bringing burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense.] See the notes upon vii. 21. xiv. 12. Incense was always laid upon the meat-offerings. (See Lev. ii. 1, 2.)

And bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord.] The peace-offerings were of three sorts; either vows, voluntary or free-will-offerings, and offerings of praise or thanksgiving. (See Lev. vii. 15, 16.) These were offered as grateful acknowledgments for deliverances in time of danger, or for other mercies received. (See Psal. cvii. 22. cxvi. 17.)

Ver. 27. *Then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof*, &c.] Compare Lam. iv. 11.

CHAP. XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Under the figure of a potter, the prophet shews God's absolute power in disposing of kingdoms, and thereupon exhorts the Jews to repentance: he then bewails their obstinacy, and threateneth destruction to those that devised evil against him.

Ver. 6. *AS the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand.*] God's absolute power over his creatures, both by virtue of his creating them, and having dominion over them, is justly represented by this metaphor. (See Isa. xlv. 8. Rom. ix. 20.)

Ver. 8. *I will repent of the evil I thought to do unto them.*] If we take repentance in a strict and proper sense, for a change of the inward purposes and resolutions, it cannot be applied to God, according to that saying of Balaam's, *God is not a man that he should repent*, (Numb. xxiii. 19.) Therefore, whenever repentance is ascribed to God, it must be meant only of a change with respect to the outward administrations of his providence, and his dealing with men otherwise than he did before: and this doth not imply a change in God, but only in ourselves: he still acts by the same rules, but we, according to our different behaviour, become the objects either of his favour or his displeasure.

Ver. 10. *I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.*] From this and the foregoing verse we may infer, That God's promises in Scripture, however uttered in general terms, are yet, for the most part, to be understood conditionally, according as men behave themselves, especially when applied to particular persons. (See Numb. xiv. 34.) And as God did justly reject those Jews, who refused to embrace the gospel, notwithstanding the general promises he had made to that people: so neither can particular Christians nor churches lay any claim to God's general promise of preserving his church, any farther than they keep close to that rule of faith and manners, which he hath prescribed to them in the New Testament.

Ver. 11. *Return ye now every one from his evil way*, &c.] See the note on xvii. 25. This and the parallel texts shew, that God's threatenings are not to be understood as absolute predictions, but such as may be reversed upon men's repentance, as appears in the famous instance of Nineveh, Jonah iii. 4. 10. (See the note on iv. 28.)

Ver. 12. *And they said, There is no hope*, &c.] See ii. 25.

Ver. 13. *Ask ye now among the heathen who hath heard such things.*] Such an apostacy as the Jews are guilty of (see ver. 15.) is not to be paralleled among the heathen. (Compare ii. 10.)

The virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.] Israel being the name that God gave Jacob, as a peculiar mark of his favour, when he blessed him and told him, that as *a prince he had power with God*, Gen. xxxii. 28. (compare 1 Kings xviii. 31.) denotes here God's peculiar people, which at that time was confined to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, God having utterly cast off the ten tribes, to whom the name of Israel was commonly given, after the division of the kingdom. In this sense we find the word Israel used, xlviii. 27. Mal. i. 1. ii. 11. *The virgin of Israel* implies that people which was dedicated to God as *a chaste virgin*, (see 2 Cor. xi. 2.) but hath since corrupted herself and gone a whoring after idols. (Compare xxxi. 4. Lam. i. 15. ii. 13. see another sense of that phrase in the notes on xiv. 17.)

Ver. 14. *Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which comes from the rock of the field?*] Lebanon derives its name from the whiteness of the snow that covers the top of it, even in summer-time, as travellers assure us. (See Maundrell's Travels, p. 138.) "Præcipuum montium Lebanum erigit—tantos inter ardores opacum fidumque nivibus." (Tac. Hist. lib. v.) If we follow the translation in the text, the sense is, It is as strange and incredible for men to forsake the true God for idols, as it would be for a thirsty traveller to forego the cold refreshing streams that come in his way. (See Prov. xxv. 25.) But the word *mitsor*, which our English renders *from the rock*, may, probably, signify *dew*, or *moisture;* from whence *Matsor*, or *Mitsraim*, the name of Egypt, is derived, because of its being watered by the river Nile. And then the words may be translated thus, as a learned friend hath suggested to me: *Shall one leave the moisture of the field* [for] *the snow-water of Lebanon, or*

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shall the running waters be forsaken for the muddy waters? (See the following note.)

Or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?] Following the translation set down in the former note; the words *majim zarim* signify *muddy waters,* such as are brought down by a flood, deriving *zarim* from *zerim,* an *inundation,* in which sense Schindler supposes the word to be used, Isa. i. 7. Translating the verse thus, it is exactly parallel with ii. 13. 18. *Thou hast forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, to drink the muddy turbid waters of Sihor.* The sense is much the same, if we understand *majim zarim,* in its usual signification, for *strange waters,* or *waters that come from another place;* that is, waters conveyed in pipes or conduits for common use.

Ver. 15. *Because my people hath forgotten me, and burnt incense to vanity.*] Idols are often called *vanity,* (see x. 15. xiv. 22. xvi. 19.) as being the product of men's vain imaginations, and serving to no good end and purpose.

And have caused them to stumble in their ways, from the ancient paths, &c.] The worship of idols hath perverted them from following the old beaten track, plainly set forth in the law of Moses, and in the examples and practice of former ages; (see vi. 16.) and hath engaged them in such new and untried ways of worship, as will end in their utter ruin, (ver. 16.)

Ver. 16. *To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing.*] A gesture by which the enemies of the Jews and their religion insulted over them, and expressed the satisfaction they took in their calamities. (See Lam. ii. 15, 16. 1 Kings ix. 8.)

Ver. 17. *I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.*] The calamities of war, and such-like wasting judgments, are elsewhere compared to an east wind, which is dry and blasting. (See Isa. xxvii. 8. Ezek. xvii. 10. xix. 12. Hos. xiii. 15.)

I will shew them the back, and not the face.] I will shew the same aversion to them that they have expressed towards me. (See ii. 27.)

Ver. 18. *Let us devise devices against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.*] Let us accuse him for a false prophet; for his threatenings plainly contradict God's promises to his people, whereby we are assured that there shall always be a succession of priests to explain the law; of scribes or learned men to unfold the difficulties that may arise concerning the more obscure parts of it; and of prophets to instruct the people in the knowledge of what is to come. (Compare viii. 8. Matt. xxiii. 34.)

They probably grounded their confidence of a succession of priests, to explain the law, and guide men's consciences, upon that passage of Moses, Deut. xvii. 9. where they are commanded to *consult the priests upon any emergent difficulty,* and follow their determinations. (Compare vii. 4.) Basnage, in his History of the Jews, book iii. chap. 29. by *wise men,* understands those who were appointed judges of controversies in their synagogues, whose business it was to give *counsel* or determination in such cases as were brought before them; in which sense he understands the *wise man* mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 5.

Come let us smite him with the tongue (or *for the tongue,* that is, for his bold speeches against the government), *and let us not give heed to any of his words.*] Let us accuse him of crimes against the state, and by that means take away his life, and then all his prophecies will die with him. This expression is parallel to that of Joseph's brethren, (Gen. xxxvii. 20.) *Come now, and let us slay him—and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

Ver. 20. *For they have digged a pit for my soul.*] They have laid a design against my life, ver. 18. (Compare Psal. xxxv. 7. lvii. 6.)

Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them.] In the execution of my prophetical office, I always interposed with my prayers in their behalf, to avert those judgments which by thy command I denounced against them. (See the note on xv. 1.)

Ver. 21. *Therefore deliver up their children to the famine,* &c.] Since they are thus incorrigible, I shall not any more intercede for them, but let those calamities of famine and sword, with which thou hast threatened them, overtake them. (See xvi. 4. and the note upon xi. 20.)

Ver. 22. *Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou bringest a troop suddenly upon them.*] When they are unexpectedly assaulted by a troop of their enemies, that come to plunder and destroy them. (See xx. 6.)

Ver. 23. *Yet, Lord, thou knowest,* &c.] Or rather, *For, Lord, thou knowest,* &c.

Forgive not their iniquity.] Compare xi. 20. xv. 15. Psal. lix. 5. It redounds to the glory of God's justice, that incorrigible sinners should meet with exemplary punishment.

CHAP. XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Under the type of breaking a potter's vessel, is foreshewed the desolation of the Jews for their sins.

Ver. 1. *GO, get thee a potter's earthen bottle.*] An earthen pitcher with a narrow neck made to drink out of; in the Hebrew *bakbuk,* called so from the noise that the draught of liquor made; so the Greek word βομβύλιος, and the old Latin verb *bilbire,* are derived from the like sound. (See Casaubon's Comment on Athenæus's sixth Book, chap. 8.) By this emblem the prophet signified, that the city and people might as easily be destroyed, if God so pleased, as an earthen vessel could be broken. (See xviii. 5.)

And take of the ancients of the people.] Some of the members of the great Sanhedrin. (Compare xxvi. 17. Ezek. viii. 11.)

And of the ancients of the priests.] The heads of the four-and-twenty courses. (See 1 Chron. xxiv. 4.)

Ver. 2. *And go forth into the valley of the son of Hinnom.*] See vii. 31.

Which is by the entry of the east gate.] By which men entered into the temple, from whence they have a prospect of the valley of Hinnom, which lay south-east of the temple. (See Josh. xv. 8. and Dr. Lightfoot's Description of the Temple.) The Hebrew reads, *the gate Harsith,* which some interpret the *dung gate,* mentioned Nehem. ii. 13. Others the *potter's gate;* the potter's field being near the temple. (See Zech. xi. 13. Matt. xxvii. 10.)

Ver. 3. *O kings of Judah.*] See xvii. 20.

The which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.] The

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very report of it shall astonish the hearers. (See 1 Sam. iii. 11. 2 Kings xxi. 12.)

Ver. 4. *Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place.*] Jerusalem was the *city of God,* (Psal. xlviii. 1, 2.) and the place of his peculiar residence; therefore called the *holy city,* Matt. xxvii. 53. but the Jews in a sacrilegious manner have defiled it, by the practice of the worst and most inhuman idolatry.

Nor the kings of Judah.] The good kings of former times, such as David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

And have filled this place with the blood of innocents.] Of the children sacrificed there to Moloch. (Compare ii. 34.)

Ver. 5. *They have built also the high places of Baal,* &c.] The words were better translated, *They have even built the high places,* &c. for the same sin is here expressed which was mentioned in the latter part of the foregoing verse, and the copulative particle *vau* is sometimes used by way of explication. (See the note on Isa. li. 19.)

To burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings to Baal.] The idol to whom these inhuman sacrifices were offered, is elsewhere called Moloch. (See Lev. xviii. 21. 2 Kings xxiii. 10.) Baal and Moloch were two names promiscuously given to one and the same idol, as appears from xxxii. 35. of this prophecy: *They have built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch.*

Baal and Moloch are equivalent words, both signifying *lord,* or *king;* and seem to have been promiscuously given by each idolatrous nation, to that idol they chiefly worshipped. And as the worship of Baal, or Belus, prevailed in several countries, so Moloch was esteemed a principal idol in other nations, as appears by the names of Malcom, Melicerta, Adrammelech, Anammelech, and the like, all derived from the word Moloch. (See Dr. Spencer, de Legibus Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 10. n. 1, 2.)

Which I commanded not, &c.] See the note on vii. 31.

Ver. 6. *This place shall no more be called Tophet,* &c.] See vii. 32. and the following verse.

Ver. 7. *And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place,* &c.] They shed innocent blood in this place, (ver. 4.) and God will discomfit them here, and will cause their blood to be shed by the hand of the Chaldeans, who shall lay siege to the city.

Ver. 8. *And I will make this city desolate, and a hissing,* &c.] See xviii. 16.

Ver. 9. *And they shall eat the flesh of their sons and of their daughters,* &c.] A terrible judgment threatened by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 53. to which place the text plainly alludes; and actually fulfilled in the siege of Jerusalem. (See Lam. iv. 10.)

Ver. 10. *Then thou shalt break the bottle in the sight of the men.*] To give them a sensible representation of the ruin threatened against them. (See li. 63, 64.)

Ver. 11. *Even so will I break this people, and this city,* &c.] The breaking of an earthen vessel is a proper emblem of utter ruin; for such a one, when it is broken, can never be mended or put to any farther use. (See Isa. xxx. 14.)

And they shall bury in Tophet.] See vii. 32.

Ver. 12. *And even make this city as Tophet.*] A place of slaughter. (See ver. 6. and the following verse.)

Ver. 13. *And the houses of Jerusalem shall be defiled as Tophet.*] Polluted with dead bodies. (See the note on vii. 32.)

Because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt incense to all the host of heaven.] The Jews built their houses with flat roofs; (see Deut. xxii. 8.) and there they dedicated altars to the host of heaven, where they could have the fullest view of them. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Zeph. iii. 5.)

Ver. 14. *He stood in the court of the Lord's house.*] The great court, which is called the *outer court,* Ezek. xlvi. 21. supposed to be the same with the *new court,* mentioned 2 Chron. xx. 5. as having been built since Solomon's time. (See xxvi. 2. and Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, chap. 18.)

Ver. 15. *Because they have hardened their necks,* &c.] See the note on xviii. 23.

CHAP. XX.

ARGUMENT.

Upon Pashur's ill treatment of Jeremy, he falls into a grievous complaint of the hardships that attended the discharge of his prophetical office, which made him weary of his life.

Ver. 1. *NOW Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord.*] The family of Immer was the sixteenth in order of the four-and-twenty courses of the priests. (See 1 Chron. xxiv. 14.) And this Pashur, by being head of his family, had a principal authority in ordering matters relating to the temple, and keeping good orders there: and therefore is called *chief governor,* or *a chief governor in the house of the Lord.* (See there, ver. 5.) So Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, are called *chief rulers of the house of God,* 2 Chron. xxxv. 8. because the first of them was chief priest, and the two other probably heads of their courses. To the same sense we may understand the *priests of the second order,* mentioned 2 Kings xxiii. 4. If we suppose Pashur to have been, in a strict sense, *chief* or supreme *governor in the house of God,* he seems to be the same officer that is called *captain of the temple,* Acts iv. 1. he that was set over the several watches or guards of the priests and Levites: for they kept watch and ward in the temple, both day and night. (See Psal. cxxxiv. 2. and Lightfoot upon Luke xxii. 4.)

Ver. 2. *And put him in the stocks that was in the high gate of Benjamin,* &c.] The Septuagint understand the word translated *the stocks,* of a dungeon, or house of correction, which was in one of the outer courts of the temple. This, the text says, was placed in the *high gate of Benjamin,* which Dr. Lightfoot explains of the upper gate in the tribe of Benjamin, that led to the temple; the mountain upon which the temple stood, being partly in the tribe of Benjamin, and partly in that of Judah. (See his Description of the Temple, chap. 27.)

Ver. 3. *The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib.*] The name which I give thee signifies *fear,* or *terror round about;* and thou thyself shalt be a dreadful example of those calamities which are coming upon

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thy friends, and all the inhabitants of this city. (Compare vi. 25. xlvi. 5. xlix. 29. Lam. ii. 22.)

Ver. 5. *Moreover I will deliver the strength of this city, and all the labours of it,* &c.] All its wealth, and all that the inhabitants have gotten by their industry, shall be a prey to their enemies. (Compare iii. 24. Ezek. xxiii. 29.) The word which we render *strength,* is elsewhere translated *treasures.* (See Prov. xv. 6. Ezek. xxii. 25.)

Ver. 6. *To whom thou hast prophesied lies.*] False prophecies of peace and deliverance. (See xiv. 14. xxviii. 15. xxix. 21.)

Ver. 7. *O Lord, thou hast deceived me,* &c.] The following verses are Jeremy's doleful reflections upon the ill success of his prophecies, which had little good effect upon others, and brought a great deal of harm to himself. The sense is, Thou hast promised to be my safeguard against mine enemies; but yet I find myself disappointed, and left exposed to their malice. (Compare xv. 18.) Some render the words, *Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded;* that is, I was over-persuaded to undertake the office of a prophet. The following words favour this sense.

Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed, &c.] It was sore against my will, that I undertook the prophetical office, which I would gladly have declined: (i. 6.) but thy commands and inspirations did, in a manner, constrain me to it. I could have no temptation to run upon this errand without being sent, since it procures me nothing but ill usage.

Ver. 8. *For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me.*] Or, *I cried out of violence, and complained aloud of spoil.* Since I began to prophesy, I have reason to complain of the hardships I have undergone upon that account. (See xi. 19, &c. xv. 15. xviii. 18.) This verse may likewise be thus explained: Since I began to prophesy as God commanded me, I have freely expostulated with my countrymen, of the violence and oppression they have been guilty of: (see vi. 7.) and therefore (so the particle *ki* often signifies) all the requital I have had for the faithful discharge of my office, has been contempt and ill usage.

Ver. 9. *Then said I, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name: but his word was in my heart as burning fire.*] This made me resolve not to prophesy any more, but I found myself *pressed in spirit,* (see Acts xviii. 5.) and unable to resist the impulses of God's Spirit, urging me to execute his commands. (Compare Job xxxii. 19. Psal. xxxix. 3.)

Ver. 10. *For I have heard the defaming of many, fear on every side.*] Or *Magor-missabib.* Many upbraided me with the ill usage I received from Pashur, and with my prophecy against him, by the name of *Magor-missabib.* If we follow the received translation, as the expression is the same with Psal. xxxi. 13. so the sense seems to be much the same in both places; *viz.* From the slanderous reports raised upon me, I had reason to apprehend some evil design against my life, as well from treacherous friends as from open enemies.

Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, &c.] My pretended friends encourage one another in spreading false reports of me; or desire to hear from my mouth more prophecies, in hopes to find some matter of accusation against me, whereby they might take away my life, and so fulfil their revenge on me.

Ver. 11. *But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one; therefore my persecutors shall stumble.*] After having given free vent to his melancholy reflections, (see the note on xv. 18.) he begins to recollect himself, and cheer up his spirits by the comfortable remembrance of God's promises to him, by which he was assured that his enemies should be disappointed in all their ill designs they had contrived against him. (See xi. 22, 23. xv. 20. xviii. 18.)

Ver. 12. *But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous.*] Who makest trial of his faith and patience by afflictions. (See Psal. xi. 5.)

Let me see thy vengeance on them.] See the note on xi. 20.

Ver. 13. *Praise ye the Lord; for he hath delivered the soul of the poor,* &c.] In confidence of his deliverance, the prophet gives thanks beforehand, as we may observe many of the Psalms that beg deliverance end in thanksgiving, as if it were already obtained. (See Psal. liv. 16. lviii. 1. 5, &c.)

Ver. 14. *Cursed be the day wherein I was born,* &c.] This, and the following verses, represent the melancholy thoughts which oppressed the mind of the prophet, while he was struggling with the reproach and malice of his enemies; and they are written in a poetical strain, as Job's lamentation is, chap. iii. like a *lessus,* or *mournful ditty;* such as the *præficæ,* or *mourning women,* used to sing. See ix. 17. wherein he expresses his wishes that he had never been born. (Compare xv. 10.)

Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.] Let it not be celebrated with those good wishes and expressions of joy, which are wont to be used on birth-days. The heathens in like manner had their *bona verba,* good wishes, proper for their birth-days: so Tibullus, (lib. ii. eleg. 2.) *Dicamus bona verba, venit natalis:* and which they abstained from using, when they were under great calamities, as Ovid speaks, Trist. lib. iii. eleg. 13. *In tantis subeunt nec bona verba malis.*

Ver. 15. *Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father,* &c.] I observed that this lamentation is written in poetical figures, like the ancient *næniæ,* or funeral songs, wherein all the circumstances are brought in, that are proper to raise the passions; and therefore are not to be looked upon as so many expressions of indignation or malice, but rather of mourning and sorrow. Just such are those figures we read in David's funeral song upon Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 21. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you," &c. And as in the forms of rejoicing upon a birth-day, they blessed every one concerned in the birth, and said, *Blessed be the womb that bare thee,* and the like: and he that brought the joyful news was always rewarded: so, in the forms of sorrow for the miserable, they used the quite contrary expressions. I must acknowledge myself indebted to the right reverend and learned Dr. Chandler, now deservedly promoted to the see of Coventry and Litchfield, for the explaining this and the foregoing verse; as likewise for his other judicious remarks upon several difficult texts in this prophecy, and that of Isaiah.

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Ver. 16. *And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not.*] O that he had been looked upon with aversion, as a token of ill luck, or a sad spectacle, such as Sodom and Gomorrah are: and let him be esteemed as unfortunate, as he would have been thought, if he had brought tidings of my death instead of my birth.

Let him hear a cry in the morning.] Such a cry as is made when an enemy comes to plunder the house, or murder the family. (Compare xviii. 22. xlviii. 3, 4.)

And the shouting at noon-tide.] The alarm of war, as the word is rendered, iv. 19. or such a rejoicing as the enemies make over the vanquished. To *hear the cry* in the morning, and *shouting at noon-day*, signifies being perpetually alarmed with the terrors of a hostile invasion. (Compare vi. 4.) The same learned person understands this verse of the lamentations made at funerals, which were performed not only with mournful voices, but likewise with instruments of music, implied in the word *terunah, shouting.* (See Matt. ix. 23.) It was the custom of the Jews, upon a funeral-day, to begin their lamentations early in the morning, and continue them till the afternoon, when the body was carried out to be buried. (See Buxtorf Synagog. p. 49.) So the sense of the verse will be, *Let this man have every day an occasion of lamentation.*

Ver. 17. *Because he slew me not from the womb,* &c.] Or, *Because I was not slain from the womb.* For the verb transitive is often taken impersonally. (See the note on Isa. xliv. 18.) I utter these wishes in the bitterness of my soul, when I consider how much better it had been that I had never been born, or given up the ghost immediately, than led a life of continual sorrow and misery. (Compare Job iii. 10, 11.)

CHAP. XXI.

ARGUMENT.

The occasion of Zedekiah's message, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, seems to be the Chaldeans raising the siege of Jerusalem, in order to meet the Egyptian army that was come to its relief: (see xxxvii. 5.) which gave Zedekiah hopes of deliverance from the Chaldeans, which were very much quashed by the return of that army, and renewing of the siege: hereupon Zedekiah inquires by messengers concerning the event of the war. (Compare ver. 9. of this chapter with xxxviii. 2.) The latter part of the chapter, from ver. 11. belongs to the same subject with the twenty-second chapter, and relates to the time of Jehoiakim.

Ver. 1. *WHEN king Zedekiah sent Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest.*] This Pashur was a different person from him mentioned xx. 1. (See xxxviii. 1.) Zephaniah is called the *second priest*, lii. 24. and 2 Kings xxv. 18. that is, he was the high-priest's sagan, or deputy. (Compare Jer. xxix. 25.)

Ver. 2. *Inquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us.*] Compare xxxvii. 7.

If so be the Lord will deal with us according to all his wondrous works.] If he will shew his wonderful power, in giving us a total deliverance from the hands of our enemies the Chaldeans. (See the Argument of the chapter.)

Ver. 4. *Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands,* &c.] Compare xxxvii. 10. Instead of doing execution upon your enemies, they shall hurt yourselves, and be the occasion of your own destruction. God will as visibly appear against you, as if a miraculous wind were to drive back your own artillery, and turn it upon yourselves; as the story is told of the discomfiture of the tyrant Eugenius's army, that came against the forces of the emperor Theodosius. (See Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 25.)

Ver. 5. *And I myself will fight against you.*] By the executioners of my wrath, the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. I will plainly appear on your enemies' side, by the success I will give to their arms.

Ver. 6. *They shall die of a great pestilence.*] A great part of those that continue in the city during the siege shall die of the pestilence; though the sword and the famine shall likewise consume many. (See ver. 9.)

Ver. 7. *He shall smite them with the edge of the sword.*] Zedekiah himself was not put to death, but carried to Babylon, where he died. (See xxiv. 5.) But his sons and his great men were slain by the command of Nebuchadnezzar. (See 2 Kings xxv. 7, 8.) It is common in all writers to express that indefinitely, which is true of the greater part of the persons concerned.

Ver. 9. *But he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans—shall live.*] God had declared his purpose of giving up the Jews and the neighbouring countries to the dominion of the Chaldeans: (xxv. 9. xxvii. 6.) so they who would comply with his declared will should have their lives, the rest should be destroyed as fighting against God.

And his life shall be unto him as a prey, &c.] He ought to think himself a considerable gainer by escaping with his life, in so general a destruction. (See xxxviii. 2. xxxix. 18. xlv. 5.) For in such a universal calamity, the best men shall *save but their own souls by their righteousness*, as Ezekiel speaks, xiv. 20.

Ver. 10. *I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good.*] Compare xliv. 11. Amos ix. 4. God's *face* is sometimes used for his anger, as it is in this and in the parallel texts.

Ver. 11. *And touching the house of the king of Judah, Hear ye the word of the Lord.*] This belongs to the same subject with the twenty-second chapter, and should not have been parted from it. Compare this and the following verse with the first, second, and third verses of that chapter.

Ver. 12. *Execute judgment in the morning.*] The king was supreme judge in all causes and controversies; (see 2 Sam. viii. 15.) what some rabbins affirm, as if the king were subject to the judgment of the Sanhedrin, and might be punished by them, is said without any precedent in Holy Scripture, and is confuted by Casaub. Exercit. xiii. in Baronium, Numb. 5. and Salmasius, in his Defensio Regia, cap. 2. (See likewise Selden, de Synedr. lib. iii. cap. 9.) The courts of judicature usually sat in the morning. See Psal. ci. 8. where the Hebrew reads, *In the morning*, or, *every morning, I will destroy all the wicked of the land.* (Compare Job xxxviii. 13, 14.)

Lest my fury go out like fire, &c.] These words are an argument, that this prophecy was antecedent to that at the beginning of the chapter, and before that peremptory de-

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cree was published against the king's house, mentioned ver. 7. of this chapter. (See the note on iv. 28.)

Ver. 13. *Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain.*] A description of Jerusalem: the former expression denoting the lower part of the city, which was surrounded with hills: (see Psal. cxxv. 2.) the latter describing Mount Zion. (Compare xvii. 3.)

Who say, Who shall come down against us?] They confided in the strength of their situation, as the Jebusites, the ancient inhabitants of the place, had formerly done. (See 2 Sam. v. 6, 7.)

Ver. 14. *I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof.*] The word *forest* is often metaphorically taken for a city, in the prophetical writings; because its stately buildings, or its principal inhabitants, resemble tall cedars standing in their several ranks. (See xxii. 7. Isa. xxvii. 24. Ezek. xx. 46. Zech. xi. 1.)

CHAP. XXII.

ARGUMENT.

This discourse, or section, which begins from the eleventh verse of the twenty-first chapter, is a collection of prophecies, wherein Jeremiah foretold the fate of several kings of Judah. The words to the twentieth verse are directed to king Jehoiakim, and from thence to the end of the chapter to Jeconiah.

Ver. 2. *HEAR the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest on the throne of David.*] The prophet directs his discourse to Jehoiakim; (see ver. 18.) and puts him in mind of the promises God had made to David's family, if they lived in obedience to his will. (See 1 Kings viii. 25.)

Thou, and thy servants, and thy people, that enter in by those gates.] Thy courtiers and other officers who attend continually on thee; (see ver. 4.) comprehending likewise all the people of the city. (See the note on ver. 4.)

Ver. 3. *And do no wrong, do no violence,* &c.] Compare ver. 17. where we find Jehoiakim taxed with those sins.

Ver. 4. *For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house,* &c.] See the note on xvii. 25. Instead of the *gates of this house,* the text reads there, *the gates of this city:* and the context here shews, that the prophecy is directed not only to the king's court in particular, but likewise to the whole city of Jerusalem, one part of which was called the city of David; and the whole looked upon as a royal city, and the place of their king's residence. (Compare ver. 2. 8.)

Ver. 5. *I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation.*] God's confirming his threatenings by an oath, is a sign that the sentence was immutable, and that nothing could reverse it but the people's sincere repentance: which condition is expressed in the foregoing part of the verse. (See Heb. vi. 17.)

Ver. 6. *For thus saith the Lord unto the king's house of Judah, Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon,* &c.] Though thou wert never so precious in my sight, wert as valuable for riches and plenty as the fat pastures of Gilead, and thy buildings as beautiful for their stateliness, as the tall cedars of Lebanon; (see the notes on xxi. 14.) yet, unless thy princes and people reform, thou shalt become nothing but ruin and desolation.

Ver. 7. *And I will prepare destroyers against thee.*] The Hebrew reads, *I will sanctify destroyers:* so xii. 3. where our translation reads, *Prepare them for the day of slaughter;* it is in the Hebrew, *Sanctify them.* (See the note on Isa. xiii. 3.)

And they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.] The prophet compared the king's palace, or the city of Jerusalem, to Lebanon, ver. 6. and here, pursuing the metaphor, he threatens to destroy both houses and inhabitants by the Chaldean army. (See the note on xxi. 14.)

Ver. 8. *And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every one to his neighbour,* &c.] They that had heard that this city had been called the city of God, and the place of his especial residence, would be astonished to find it a scene of his judgments and vengeance. Thus was fulfilled that threatening of Moses, (Deut. xxviii. 37.) That God would make the Jews an *astonishment* to other nations. (See likewise 1 Kings ix. 8.)

Ver. 10. *Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away,* &c.] Weep not for Josiah, for he is buried in peace, and *taken away from the evils to come;* (see 2 Kings xxii. 20.) but rather lament Jehoahaz his successor, whom Pharaoh-Nechoh hath carried captive into Egypt, from thence never to return. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 34.)

Ver. 11. *For thus saith the Lord touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father,* &c.] It is a great dispute among commentators and chronologers who this Shallum was, there being no person of that name mentioned in the succession of the Jewish kings in sacred history; and the Shallum mentioned as Josiah's son, 1 Chron. iii. 15. is expressly called his *fourth son,* who could not probably succeed his father immediately, as it is said expressly of Shallum here in the text. Without entering far into this dispute, I shall lay this down as most probable, that the Shallum, mentioned in the text, is the same with Jehoahaz: for the characters here set down can agree to none else. It was he that *reigned instead of his father Josiah;* he likewise went out of Jerusalem, or was carried away captive, and never returned any more. (See ver. 11.) The same may be proved from the order of the prophecies set down in this chapter: the eleventh and twelfth verses are concerning Jehoahaz: from the thirteenth to the twentieth relate to Jehoiakim, and the remaining part of the chapter regards the reign of Jeconiah. Why he is called Shallum, is not easy at this distance to conjecture; some suppose that name given him by way of reproach, because of the shortness of his reign, in which he resembled that king Shallum mentioned 2 Kings xv. 13. So Jeconiah is called Coniah, by way of contempt, ver. 24. It is farther certain, that this Shallum cannot be the same with him mentioned 1 Chron. iii. 15. (as Archbishop Usher supposed; see his Annal. V. T. ad An. M. 3371.) because that person is spoken of as younger than Zedekiah, whereas this Shallum being the same with Jehoahaz, was without question older. (Compare 2 Kings xxiii. 13. with xxiv. 18.)

Ver. 13. *Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness,* &c.] The prophet proceeds to denounce God's judgments against Jehoiakim; (see ver. 18.) who it seems built himself a stately palace in those calamitous times,

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and took no care to defray the wages of his workmen; but maintained his own luxury by the oppression of those who were tolive by their labour: a crying sin, and too common among the great men of the world, severely prohibited both in the Old and New Testament. (See Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. James v. 4.)

Ver. 14. *And cutteth him out windows.*] The word *hallonai* signifies literally *my windows;* and so our margin reads, but the *affix* is elsewhere redundant. (See Zech. xiv. 5.) Mr. Gregory, in his Observations upon the Scripture, (chap. 13.) allows the marginal reading, and understands the word of a private oratory, or chapel, which Jehoiakim ordered to be made in his palace; and that God reproves him for a vain ostentation of piety, when at the same time he had no regard to common justice, in making an offering to God out of other men's labours.

Ver. 15. *Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar?*] Will a house, finely adorned and furnished, be a fortress and defence to thee against thy enemies, that come to deprive thee of thy kingdom? This is the sense of the words, if we follow the English translation; but the verb *tichareh* properly signifies to *vie,* or contend with; and so it is translated, Jer. xii. 5. and then the sense will be, Is this a proper method to secure thy kingdom, only to vie with other princes, who shall have the most stately palace?

Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then [or therefore, see Noldius's Concordance, p. 7.] *it was well with him?*] Thy father Josiah lived in sufficient plenty, and in a state suitable to his character, and yet was a strict observer of justice, both in his public and private capacity, and did not betake himself to such sordid methods of injustice and oppression for the support of his grandeur: the reason was, because the blessing of God was upon him, as a reward of his justice and integrity.

Ver. 16. *Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?*] Such a strict regard to justice was the genuine effect of his piety and true knowledge of God.

Ver. 17. *But thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness,* &c.] For this cause Jehoiakim is compared to a lion by the prophet Ezekiel, xix. 6.

Ver. 18. *They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister!* &c.] The prophet repeats part of the *lessus,* or funeral ditty, which the public mourners used to sing at funerals; (see the note on ix. 17. xx. 14. and compare 1 Kings xiii. 30.) signifying that Jehoiakim should not be buried with those solemn lamentations, with which the memory of his predecessors, particularly that of his father, had been honoured. (See 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.)

They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah Lord! or, Ah his glory!] That is, how is his glory departed and vanished! Another burden, or *chorus,* of the funeral song.

Ver. 19. *He shall be buried with the burial of an ass,* &c.] Compare xxxvi. 30. Jehoiakim was advanced to the kingdom by Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt, (2 Kings xxxiii. 34.) He followed the fortune of the king that set him up, and upon the conquest of Egypt by the Chaldeans, (see Jer. xlvi. 2.) after three years' reign, he was taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar, and put into irons: (see Dan. i. 2. 2 Kings xxiv. 1. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.) but afterward he released him, and made him a tributary king. After three years' obedience, Jehoiakim rebelled in confidence of assistance from Egypt: in the tenth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar's army overran Judea; (see 2 Kings xxiv. 2.) and in the following year they besieged Jerusalem, and probably took Jehoiakim prisoner in some sally that he made upon them; whereupon they killed him, and then cast out his dead body into the highway, like the carcass of an ass, denying him the common rites of burial. (See Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 7, 8.) Accordingly, he is said to have *slept with his fathers,* (2 Kings xxiv. 6.) but not to have been buried with his fathers.

[Ver. 19. *Drawn and cast forth.*] The expression is taken from the custom of dogs to draw about a carcass before they tear and devour it. Compare xv. 3. where it is in the Hebrew, *The dogs to draw;* our English reads, *to tear;* but the Hebrew word is the same in both places. See likewise xlix. 20.]

Ver. 20. *Go up to Lebanon; and cry, and lift up thy voice in Bashan.*] An ironical expression, directed either to the land of Judea, or the city Jerusalem; as if he had said, You may go up to the tops of the highest mountains, and make what outcries or signals you can to implore foreign aid and assistance, but all to no purpose.

And cry from the passages.] From the borders, or rivers, which are the bounds of your country: some interpreters suppose the word *Abarim* to be a proper name, and understand it of Mount Abarim. (See Numb. xxvii. 12.)

For all thy lovers are destroyed.] All thy foreign allies, whose friendship and assistance thou didst seek, and whom thou didst court by complying with their idolatries. (Compare iv. 30. Lam. i. 19. Ezek. xvi. 33. 37. Hos. viii. 9.) The prophet means more particularly the Egyptians, upon whose assistance they chiefly depended, but whose power was very much weakened by the king of Babylon. (See xxxvii. 5—7. 2 Kings xxiv. 7. Lam. iv. 17.)

Ver. 21. *I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear.*] The common infirmity of mankind, who, being puffed up with prosperity, think themselves too wise to stand in need of good advice, and therefore put off the hearkening to it till they are in extremities, when it will do them little or no benefit.

This hath been thy manner from thy youth, &c.] See ii. 7. iii. 25. vii. 23, &c. xxii. 30.

Ver. 22. *The wind shall eat up all thy pastors.*] God's judgments, like a blasting wind, (see iv. 11.) shall destroy all thy governors, both ecclesiastical and civil: (see the note on ii. 8.) their honour and authority shall cease, and the whole frame of government shall be dissolved.

Thy lovers shall go into captivity.] Thy allies (see ver. 20.) shall themselves be made captives by the Chaldeans, and shall not be able to preserve themselves, much less to give any assistance to thee. (See xxv. 9.)

Ver. 23. *O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars.*] A metaphorical description of Jerusalem, whose stately buildings are elsewhere compared to the tall cedars of a forest. (See the note on xxi. 14.)

How gracious wilt thou be, when pangs come upon thee? &c.] Or rather, *How humble,* or *suppliant, wilt thou be* in those pangs of affliction that shall suddenly come upon thee; (see vi. 24. xxx. 6.) whereas before thou wast too proud to hearken to any advice that was offered. (See ver. 21.)

The verb *hanan* doth commonly signify to implore mercy or favour, and the noun *tahanunim* is used in the same

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sense, iii. 21. xxxi. 9. Some render the words, *What grace or favour wilt thou find, when pangs,* &c.

Ver. 24. *Though Coniah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.*] Though he were never so near and dear to me, such a one as was always under my eye and care, (compare Cant. viii. 6. Hag. ii. 23.) yet his wickedness would make him forfeit all my favour towards him. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 9.) *Jehoiachin,* or *Jeconiah,* as his name is writ, 1 Chron. iii. 16. is called *Coniah* here, and ver. 28. by way of contempt.

Ver. 26. *And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee,* &c.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 15. This implies that he had no children when he was carried away captive. (See ver. 28.)

Ver. 27. *But unto the land whither they desire to return.*] See xliv. 14.

Ver. 28. *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol?*] An interrogation by way of admiration; *q. d.* Would any one have thought that this man, that was invested with royal dignity, should come to be no better than a broken image of royalty, divested of all power and authority, and an object of scorn and reproach? Nothing can be more contemptible than a broken idol, which can be put to no farther use, and is no longer an object of worship, but of derision.

Wherefore are they cast out; he and his seed, &c.] The children which he probably had after he was carried to Babylon, where he lived many years a captive: (see 2 Kings xxv. 27.) though none of them lived to succeed in the royal authority. (See the note on ver. 30.)

Ver. 29. *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.*] The prophets often bespeak men's attention, by appealing to heaven and earth; that is, to all creatures, and particularly to the inhabitants of this world, to hearken to God's words. (See Deut. xxxiii. 1. Isa. i. 2. xxxiv. 1. Micah i. 2. vi. 1, 2.) The word *eretz* may be rendered *land,* as it often is, and applied to Judea.

Ver. 30. *Write ye this man childless.*] Or, *Let this man be written childless:* the personal being used for the impersonal. (See xx. 17.) When God commands a thing to be written, it signifies that such a truth is of great importance, and deserves to be recorded. (See the note on xxx. 2. and on Isa. xxx. 9.) "Quæ scribuntur, certa sunt;" *The committing things to writing denotes their certainty;* as Castalio observes upon the place. So God would have it taken notice of as a remarkable judgment upon Jeconiah, that in him the direct line of the Jewish kings, derived from Solomon downward, should fail; and the next heir to the crown should be of a collateral branch; *viz.* Salathiel, who was the son of Neri, and derived his pedigree from Nathan the son of David, (Luke iii. 27. 31.) Salathiel is indeed called the son of Jeconiah, 1 Chron. iii. 17. and Matt. i. 12. but in both these places he is called so, not with respect to his natural extraction, but to his political succession, as being next heir to the crown; just as, at the sixteenth verse of the same chapter of the Chronicles, Zedekiah is called the *son of Jeconiah,* though he was really his uncle, because he succeeded him in the kingdom. And it is plain that St. Matthew did not intend to set down an exact genealogy from father to son, but only to prove, in general, that Christ was the son, both of David and Abraham, as he tells us, ver. 1. In order to which end, he divides the whole series of time, from Abraham to David, into three parts, and then subdivides each portion of time into fourteen generations; to comply with which method, he omits three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, (ver. 8.)

CHAP. XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet having foretold in the former chapter the utter destruction of the Jewish kingdom and government: in this he foretells the restoration of both under the Messias, and then proceeds to reprove at large the evil arts of the false prophets, and other pretenders, to inspiration.

Ver. 1. *WOE to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture.*] Pastors comprehend both civil and ecclesiastical governors. (See the note on ii. 8.) This acceptation of the word agrees with the prophet's complaint elsewhere; that their rulers, as well as their priests and prophets, were rather corrupters than reformers of the people's manners. (See ii. 26. xxxii. 32.) And the Messias himself, whose coming is foretold, ver. 5. for the rectifying these disorders, was both a king and a priest.

Ver. 2. *Therefore thus saith the Lord—against the pastors that feed my flock.*] That undertake the care of my people, though they do not faithfully execute their trust.

Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them.] Instead of looking after them, you have suffered them to be dispersed; through your ill example they have gone astray to idolatry; and that with your other sins hath brought captivity, and a general dispersion upon them.

Behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings.] See xxii. 22.

Ver. 3. *And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries,* &c.] See ver. 8.

Ver. 4. *And they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed.*] They shall live secure from enemies: (see ver. 6.) nor shall they be consumed by those dreadful judgments of sword, famine, and pestilence, which have of late destroyed so many of them. (See xvi. 4. xxxii. 37. and the note there.)

Ver. 5. *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch.*] The Messias is often called the *Branch,* to denote his descent from the stock of David. (See Isa. iv. 2. Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12. compare likewise Isa. xi. 1.)

And shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.] This character is elsewhere given of the kingdom of Christ. (See Psal. lxxii. 2. Isa. xi. 5. xxxii. 1.) His laws being the most perfect rule of righteousness, and he himself the most impartial rewarder of every man according to his works, (Rev. xxii. 12.)

Ver. 6. *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.*] This prophecy is in part fulfilled in all true believers, the *mystical Israel,* but will receive its utmost completion when the Jewish nation shall be restored; a blessing foretold by most of the ancient prophets, (see the note on Isa. xi. 11.) who generally join Judah and Israel together, as equally sharers in the blessing, and no more two, but one kingdom. (See the note on iii. 18.)

Judah shall dwell safely.] This denotes outward peace and freedom from the annoyance of enemies, in opposition

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to the militant state of the church, when it is always under apprehensions from the designs of its adversaries. (Compare xxxii. 37. xlvi. 28. Ezek. xxxiv. 28. Micah iv. 4. Zeph. iii. 13.

[The words may be properly explained to a spiritual sense; importing, that the Messias shall subdue all our spiritual enemies, and remove those impediments which hindered men from going on in a steady course of obedience. And to this sense of the words, Zacharias seems to allude in his hymn: (Luke i. 74, 75.) *That we being safely*, or securely, *delivered from the hands of our enemies* (for so the sense of the original runs), *might serve him in holiness and righteousness.*]

And this is his name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.] He shall really be what the title imports: (see the note on Isa. vii. 14.) he shall be JEHOVAH, or the true God, and *our righteousness*, or *the means of our justification.* (Compare Isa. xlv. 24, 25. 1 Cor. i. 30.) The title of *Jehovah* is elsewhere given to the Messias by the prophets. (See Isa. xl. 10. xlviii. 17. Hos. i. 7. Zech. ii. 10, 11. Mal. iii. 1.)

Ver. 7, 8. *Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord,* &c.] This wonderful work of God's in restoring the Jewish nation after their dispersions all the world over, (together with the bringing in the fulness of the gentiles, which will be likewise brought to pass by this means, see the note on Isa. lxvi. 12.) will so far exceed the miracles which he wrought in their deliverance out of Egypt, that this latter will not deserve to be compared or mentioned with the former. St. Paul calls this restoration of the Jews, *Life from the dead,* (Rom. xi. 15.) that is, as surprising a wonder, as if a dead body were restored to life again.

Ver. 9. *Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets,* &c.] The prophet describes the terror and concern which was upon him, when he considered the horrible sin of the false prophets, in counterfeiting a Divine mission, and the dreadful consequences of such a practice, which increases the sins of the people, and aggravates their punishments. The prophets were sometimes struck with a terrible apprehension of those judgments which they denounced against others. (See the note on xv. 18. Isa. xv. 5. Habak. iii. 16.) The Vulgar Latin interprets the first word of this verse, "Lanebyim, ad prophetas," *to the prophets:* as if it were the title of the following propheey.

Ver. 10. *For the land is full of adulterers, and because of swearing the land mourneth.*] By swearing is chiefly here meant perjury. (Compare this verse with Hos. iv. 2.) The Hebrew word signifies indifferently *swearing* or *cursing:* the Jewish forms of adjuration used in their courts of justice for the discovery of the truth, had usually an imprecation joined to them. So the words import, that men ventured to forswear themselves, and incur the imprecation implied in an oath, rather than discover the truth in the case of theft, and such-like crimes, wherein they were called upon to be witnesses. (Compare Prov. xxix. 24.) This the prophet saith is one of those crying sins for which God hath visited the nation with severe judgments. And the sins here mentioned, which did abound so much among the people, were in a great measure owing to the ill example of the priests and prophets. (See ver. 11. 14, 15.)

The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.] See the note on xii. 4.

And their course is evil, and their force is not right.] Or, *And their violence is evil,* as the margin reads, and so the word is translated xxii. 17. Men abuse their power, to the wronging and oppressing their brethren, and add violence to the power they are possessed of, for the compassing their wicked designs. If this be understood of the prophets and priests, to whom this discourse is chiefly directed, (see ver. 9. 11.) it implies, that they make use of ill arts to establish the authority they have gained over the people, which they do not employ for the bettering, but rather for the corrupting their manners. (Compare v. 13.)

Ver. 11. *Yea, in my house have I found their wickedness.*] See the note on vii. 30.

Ver. 12. *Therefore their way shall be to them as slippery ways in the darkness,* &c.] They shall fail and miscarry in all their designs, like men that stumble and fall in dark and slippery ways. (See Psal. xxxv. 6.)

For I will bring evil upon them, &c.] See xi. 23.

Ver. 13, 14. *I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria —I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing,* &c.] He compares the sins of the prophets of Samaria and Jerusalem together, and pronounces those of the latter to be more enormous: because they pronounced their false prophecies in the name of the true God, and entitled him to all their impostures; the wickedness of their lives also reflected a dishonour upon his name and religion. (Compare iii. 11.)

They commit adultery.] See xxix. 23.

And walk in lies.] Utter their own imaginations, and call them Divine visions. (See ver. 16.)

They strengthen also the hands of the evil-doers, &c.] They confirm men in their evil doings, both by their own ill example, and by promising them peace and security. (See ver. 17. Ezek. xiii. 22.)

They are all of them to me as Sodom, &c.] See Deut. xxxii. 32. Isa. i. 10. Ezek. xvi. 46. 48.

Ver. 15. *Behold, I will feed them with wormwood,* &c.] See the notes on viii. 14. ix. 15.

For from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.] The word *hanupah* is properly rendered *profaneness;* for the word *haneph* signifies a wicked or profane person, Job viii. 13. xiii. 16. xv. 24. Isa. ix. 17. Though our English translates the word a *hypocrite* in all those texts.

Ver. 16. *They make you vain.*] Or rather, *They deceive you;* so Psal. lxii. 10. Our translation renders the word, *Become not vain in robbery or oppression;* but the sense is, *Deceive not yourselves in robbery,* or oppression, as if that would be any real advantage to you.

They speak a vision of their own heart, &c.] See ver. 21.

Ver. 17. *They say to them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace.*] See the note on vi. 14.

Ver. 18. *Who hath stood in the council of the Lord?*] The word *sôd* signifies both a secret, and the assembly to which the secret is committed, or where it is debated: the expression here alludes to the privy-counsellors of princes, as if the prophet had said, Who among these false prophets can pretend to have the secret counsels of the Almighty communicated to him? So when the apostle, alluding to Isa. xl. 13. saith, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* (1 Cor. ii. 16.) the context shews, that he designs by that question to exclude only the carnal or natural man from being en-

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lightened from above, or being a competent judge of Divine truths.

Ver. 19, 20. *Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury,* &c.] If these prophets had really known God's purposes and intentions, they would not have said, *Peace, peace,* to the wicked, (ver. 17.) but have prophesied a grievous destruction just coming upon them; for that is what will certainly come to pass, and the event will convince you of the truth of what I say. The sudden strokes of God's vengeance are often compared to a whirlwind. (See xxv. 32. Psal. lviii. 9. Isa. xxi. 1. Amos i. 4. Zech. vii. 14. ix. 14.)

Ver. 20. *The anger of the Lord shall not return,* &c.] *It shall not return to me void,* as we read, Isa. lv. 11. The expression is taken from a messenger that comes back without doing his business.

In the latter days ye shall consider [or understand] *it perfectly.*] When this judgment hath overtaken you, and ye have felt the evils threatened come upon you in your several captivities, then ye shall more fully understand the meaning of this prophecy. These two verses are repeated, xxx. 23, 24. (See the note upon that place.)

Ver. 21. *I have not sent those prophets, yet they ran.*] See xiv. 14. xxvii. 15. xxix. 9.

Ver. 22. *But if they had stood in my counsel.*] See ver. 18.

Then they should have turned them from their evil way.] This was the design of all God's messages by his prophets; (see xxv. 5.) and therefore all true prophets would make this their principal aim. And the giving encouragement to men's carnal security, is often mentioned as a mark of a false prophet. (See vi. 14. Ezek. xiii. 10. 18. 22.)

Ver. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?* &c.] Can these false prophets think to impose upon me, or vent their own dreams in my name, and I not discover them? as if either distance or secrecy could place any thing out of the reach of my power and knowledge.

Ver. 25, 26. *I have heard what the prophets said,* &c.] I know very well the falsehood of their pretences, though they think I take no notice of it, and so continue to act the same counterfeit part over again.

Ver. 27. *Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams—as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.*] Their giving heed to these false prophets, is as effectual a method of making my people forget me and my laws, as the setting up an idolatrous way of worship, which hath been too successfully practised by their fathers.

Ver. 28. *The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream—What is the chaff to the wheat?*] Let not these false pretences to dreams or visions discourage the true prophets from the faithful discharge of their office; for the difference between true prophecies and counterfeits, is as evident as that between the chaff and the wheat.

Ver. 29. *Is not my word like fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces?*] These are the properties of my word, by which it may be distinguished from all counterfeits, that it is *quick and powerful,* resembled by fiery tongues, Acts ii. 3. (compare Isa. vi. 6.) Like fire, it makes its way through all opposition, and the threatenings it denounces will as certainly take hold of the ungodly, as fire does of stubble or dry wood. (Compare v. 14.) And as a hammer breaks to pieces the hardest rock, so is my word, when skilfully applied, able to beat down the confidence of the most hardened sinner.

Ver. 30. *Behold, I am against the prophets—that steal my words every man from his neighbour.*] That imitate, or rather mimic, the true prophets, speaking in my name as they do, and saying, *Thus saith the Lord,* (ver. 31.) and using their words, but applying them to their own purpose, or it may be adding their own inventions to them.

Ver. 31. *I am against the prophets—that use their tongues.*] Like those that said, *Our lips are our own,* Psal. xii. 4. and we may use them as we please. Some suppose the Hebrew *lokechim* to signify the same as *cholekim,* the letters being only transposed; and then the phrase denotes speaking *smooth things.* (See Isa. xxx. 10.)

Ver. 32. *And cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness.*] By their folly, their rashness, and inconsistence, with themselves. (Compare Zeph. iii. 4. Judg. ix. 4.) Schultens explains the word *pahazuth* to signify vain boasting, that is, a pretence to Divine inspiration, which they had not. (See his Anim. in Job, p. 144.)

Ver. 33. *What is the burden of the Lord?*] The word *massa,* or *burden,* signifies a burdensome prophecy, big with ruin and destruction. (See Isa. xiii. 1. xvi. 1. and elsewhere.) The false prophets said, *Peace, peace,* (see ver. 17.) derided the true ones whose predictions were full of threatenings, as if God's messages were a burden they were weary of bearing; and made a jest of these words, *the burden of the Lord,* with which they prefaced their prophecies. Upon this account God forbade the use of that expression; see the following verses.

Ver. 36. *For every man's word shall be his burden: for ye have perverted the words of the living God.*] You shall be severely accountable for your loose and profane speeches, wherewith you deride and pervert the words and messages of God himself.

Ver. 39. *Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you.*] *Tollam vos portans,* as St. Jerome renders it; and the Septuagint to the same purpose, *I will carry you away,* or *remove you* [as a burden]. Taking the verb *nashah* in the sense of the verb *nasa,* as words of a like sound are often of a promiscuous signification. This makes the sense more acute, and pertinent to the foregoing verses.

And I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence.] The Hebrew reads thus, *I will cast you and the city which I gave you and your fathers out of my presence.* For the verb *natash* writ with a *teth,* is equivalent to the verb *natash* with a *tau;* according to the observation made just now, concerning words of a like sound.

CHAP. XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Under the emblem of two baskets of figs, the prophet shews the different fates of those Jews who were carried captive with Jeconiah, and those that remained still in their own country with Zedekiah.

Ver. 1. *BEHOLD, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord.*] The vision represented two such

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baskets of figs, as used to be offered up for first-fruits at the temple. (See Deut. xxvi. 2.)

After that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive Jeconiah, &c.] See an account of Jeconiah's captivity, 2 Kings xxiv. 12—14. This captivity was in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, (ibid. ver. 12.)

Ver. 2. *One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe.*] Such as were offered for the first-fruits; these were most valued for their goodness and rarity. (See Hos. ix. 10.)

Ver. 5. *Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah.*] The Jews who were left in their own country thought themselves better beloved of God, than their brethren who were carried away captive: to check this vain confidence, God promises to shew the latter particular signs of his favour in a strange land, and to shew distinguishing marks of his displeasure upon the former.

Ver. 6. *I will bring them again to this land.*] See xxix. 2. 10.

And I will build them, and not pull them down.] This may be understood both of the prosperous estate God would give them in the land of their captivity, where they should both build houses and propagate their families, (see xxix. 5, 6.) and likewise contains a promise of restoring them and their posterity to their own country. (Ibid. ver. 10.)

Ver. 7. *And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord,* &c.] Compare xxix. 12, 13. To these first captives chiefly those blessings belong, which are promised to the Jews upon their return from captivity; such as were the knowledge and fear of God, and grace to live in obedience to his commandments. (Compare xxx. 22. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 38, 39.) These were in some degree accomplished, in the times after the captivity, when the Jews adhered constantly to their religion, and were very careful of falling into idolatry: but I conceive the eminent completion of this prophecy will be at the time of the general restoration of that nation, so often mentioned in the prophets. (See the notes upon xxx. 3.)

Ver. 8. *And them that dwell in the land of Egypt.*] See chap. xliii. xliv.

Ver. 9. *And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth,* &c.] All those judgments denounced against the obstinate and incorrigible shall be fulfilled in them. (See Deut. xxviii. 25. 37. 1 Kings ix. 7.)

A reproach.] See Dan. ix. 6.

And a curse.] Men shall use this phrase as a form of execration, *God make thee like Zedekiah.* (Compare xxix. 22.) On the contrary, to make a man a blessing implies, that his name should be mentioned as a signal instance of God's favour. (See Gen. xlviii. 20. Zech. viii. 13.)

Ver. 10. *Till they be consumed from off the land that I gave to them and their fathers.*] My judgments shall follow them so close, both here and when they are carried into captivity, that neither they nor any of their posterity shall ever enjoy any share of their own country. (Compare Ezek. v. 12.)

CHAP. XXV.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains a summary of Jeremiah's commission to prophesy the destruction of Judea, and all the neighbouring countries, which should be reduced under the power of the kings of Babylon for seventy years: and then an end should be put to that monarchy by Cyrus, who set up the Persian monarchy. This age is called by Sir John Marsham the *age of the destruction of cities,* by reason of the devastations made by the Babylonian conquests. (See his Chron. Canon. Sæculum. 18.)

Ver. 1. *THE word that came to Jeremiah—in the fourth year of Jehoiakim—that is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar,* &c.] The first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to the Scripture account, is coincident with the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim. (Compare Dan. i. 1.) This reckoning anticipates the computation of Ptolemy's canon by two years, which two years Nebuchadnezzar reigned with his father. According to this account, the Scripture reckons his reign to continue five-and-forty years: (see the notes on lii. 31.) which, according to the common computation, lasted but forty-three. But Daniel, ii. 1. writing in Chaldee, follows the computation in use among the Chaldeans.

Ver. 3. *From the thirteenth year of Josiah—unto this day, that is the three-and-twentieth year.*] For Jeremiah prophesied nineteen years under Josiah, who reigned thirty-one years, and this was the beginning of Jehoiakim's fourth year.

Ver. 4. *And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets.*] There were several prophets contemporary with Jeremiah, two of which are mentioned in Scripture; the prophet Zephaniah, and Urijah the son of Shemaiah, concerning whom see xxvi. 20. From the time of Samuel, when God's answers by *Urim* began to cease, there were appointed *schools* or seminaries for training men up, and fitting them for the prophetical office. (See 1 Sam. x. 5. xix. 20. compared with Acts iii. 24.) And God usually made choice of such persons of this education to exercise this function, as appears by the words of Amos, (vii. 14.) *I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son,* and consequently not qualified for that office by my education: but I was a herdman, and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. From the time of the schools of the prophets being thus settled, there was a succession of prophets continued till the captivity; and then the office began by degrees to fail, which is the reason of that complaint, *That the prophets see no visions;* which we find mentioned Lam. ii. 9. Ezek. vii. 26. Psal. lxxiv. 9.

Rising early and sending them.] See the note on vii. 13.

Ver. 6. *And go not after other gods.*] Though the Jews were guilty of many other sins, yet their crying sin was idolatry, as being a plain renouncing God's authority, who had by so many miracles of mercy set them apart to himself and his own service.

Ver. 9. *Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north.*] See the note on i. 15.

And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant.] Kings and princes are the great instruments of Providence with respect to human affairs. Some of them God raises up to be executioners of his judgments upon sinful people; such was he of whom God saith, (Hos. xiii. 11.) *I gave thee a king in mine anger.* Such was Nebuchadnezzar here

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spoken of, whom God calls his *servant*, because he *wrought for him*, as God speaks concerning him, Ezek. xix. 20. that is, he executed God's judgments upon Tyre; God making use of his ambition and desire of conquest, and prospering his arms, in order to the punishment of the neighbouring countries for their sins: see a like instance in the king of Assyria, whom God calls the *rod of his anger*, Isa. x. 5, &c. And in later times, Attila the Hun called himself *Flagellum Dei*, the *scourge of God*, ordained by him to punish that corruption of manners which had overrun the Christians in the western part of the Roman empire.

And against all these nations round about.] See ver. 19, &c. Some of these, particularly Egypt, were the Jews' confederates, upon whose assistance they relied; and the subduing them made way for the easier conquest of Judea. (See xxxvii. 5. 8.)

Perpetual desolation.] It is a common observation, that the Hebrew word *olam* doth not always signify *eternity*, or perpetuity in a strict sense, but is sometimes taken for such a duration as had a remarkable period to conclude it: so it is said of a servant, that *he shall serve his master for ever*, Exod. xxi. 6. which the Jews expound till the next jubilee. So here the sense of the word is to be restrained to the period of seventy years, mentioned ver. 11. (See the note on xxxii. 40.)

Ver. 10. *Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom,* &c.] See the notes on vii. 34. xvi. 9.

The sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.] There shall be no marks of trade for the carrying on the common necessaries of life; such as is the grinding of bread-corn: there will be no use of candl ewhere the inhabitants are dispersed and destroyed, nor will there be occasion for such illuminations as are usual upon festival solemnities, in the time of general desolation, (ver. 11.) Compare Rev. xviii. 22, 23. where we may observe, that St. John exactly follows the Hebrew text, whereas the LXX. in this place, instead of *the sound of the millstones*, read ὀσμὴν μύρου, *the smell of ointment*. From which, and several other places of the New Testament, it appears that the apostles and evangelists did not implicitly follow the Greek translation, but only when they thought it agreeable to the original text. (See St. Jerome's preface to the 15th book of his Commentaries upon Isaiah, and his commentary upon Jer. xxxi. 31. and Zech. xii. 10.)

Ver. 11. *And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon.*] That is, Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. The word *king* is elsewhere used collectively, for a succession of kings in the same family or kingdom. (See the note on Isa. xxiii. 13.)

Seventy years.] This computation of seventy years' captivity, is to be reckoned from the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, which is coincident with the third ending, and the fourth beginning of Jehoiakim; (see ver. 1.) when the king of Babylon made his first attempt upon Judea. (See Dan. i. 1. 3.) From which time to the first year of Cyrus's reign over the Assyrian monarchy is just seventy years. Whereas the prophet Zechary, who reckons the seventy years' captivity completed in the second year of Darius, (see Zech. i. 12.) commences his computation from the besieging the city; and when he prolongs his computation to the fourth year of Darius, (vii. 1. 5.) he dates it from the destruction of the city and temple.

Ver. 12. *And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Bàbylon and that nation,* &c.] God often punishes the persons, whom he makes instruments of his vengeance upon others, for those very things which they did by his appointment; because their intent was purely to carry on their own ambitious and cruel purposes, and not at all to fulfil God's will, or advance his glory. So that the evil they did was altogether their own, and the good that was produced out of it was to be ascribed to God. See a remarkable passage to this purpose, relating to Sennacherib, Isa. x. 5. 16.

And will make it perpetual desolations.] See the note on l. 40.

Ver. 13. *Even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all nations.*] Particularly in the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters. The book here mentioned, is that collection of prophecies against the countries round about Judea, which in the Greek copies follows immediately after this verse; but in the Hebrew copies are placed by themselves at the latter end of the book, from the forty-sixth chapter to the end of the fifty-first. This verse seems to justify the order in which the Septuagint have placed these prophecies.

Ver. 14. *For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also.*] He means those kings and nations who were Cyrus's confederates. (See l. 9. 41. li. 27.)

Ver. 15. *Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it.*] God's judgments are metaphorically represented by a cup of intoxicating liquors; because they fill men with astonishment, and bereave them of their common judgment and discretion. See the note on Isa. li. 17. and compare Psal. lxxv. 8. Jer. xlviii. 26. xlix. 12. li. 31. Habak. ii. 16. Rev. xiv. 10. xvi. 19. In both which places, St. John plainly alludes to this place, and expresses the sense of the original more fully and exactly than the Septuagint do. (See the note upon ver. 10.)

Ver. 16. *And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad,* &c.] That astonishment, and those unsettled counsels and resolutions, which are here the effects of God's judgments, are elsewhere compared to drunkenness. (See li. 57. Lam. iv. 21. Isa. xix. 14. Nahum iii. 11. Habak. ii. 16.)

Ver. 17. *Then I took the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink,* &c.] The words, in pursuance of the same metaphor, import the prophet's obeying God's command, and denouncing his judgments upon all the several nations hereafter mentioned. (Compare ver. 28.) The prophets are said to do that which they declare it is God's purpose to do. (See the note on i. 10.) If we explain the words more strictly to the letter, we may suppose the cup of God's wrath represented to the prophet in a vision, (as mystical Babylon was represented to St. John, with a *golden cup* in her hand, Rev. xvii. 4.) which he was commanded to hand round to the nations here specified.

Ver. 18. *To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof,* &c.] The Jews are mentioned first, because Jeremiah, as well as the rest of the prophets, was in the first place sent to them; (see ver. 3, 4.) and they were to have the greatest share in the judgments denounced. (See Dan. ix. 12. Amos iii. 2.)

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As it is this day.] This relates to the desolation of Judea and Jerusalem, when all that Jeremy had foretold against them was fulfilled; and therefore must have been added, either by Baruch's amanuensis, or else by Ezra; or whoever it was that collected Jeremy's prophecies into one volume, who, it is likely, added the fifty-second chapter.

Ver. 19. *Pharaoh king of Egypt.*] See chap. xlvi.

Ver. 20. *And all the mingled people.*] The word is *Ereb* in the Hebrew, which occurs again in the twenty-fourth verse. Some understand it of the Arabians, the name of that people being written *Ereb*, as well as *Arab;* (see 1 Kings x. 15.) but Arabia being mentioned (ver. 24.) as distinct from these people, that sense of the word doth not seem probable. So I rather take the word in the sense our translators understood it, for a mixture of several nations, who dwelt either upon the coasts of the Mediterranean, or of the Red Sea.

And all the kings of the land of Uz.] There are three persons called by the name of Uz in Scripture, who gave this appellation to three several countries, as Bochart observes in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 8. First, the son of Aram, (Gen. x. 23.) whom he supposes to have settled in Syria, near Damascus. Second, the son of Nahor, (Gen. xxi. 21.) who settled in Arabia Deserta; from whom Job descended. Third, the son of Esau, (Gen. xxxvi. 28.) from whom Idumea was so called, which is here meant; and mentioned again by our prophet, and its destruction foretold, Lam. iv. 21.

The kings mentioned here and in the following verses, were petty princes of several clans or colonies. The title of *king* is given in Scripture to any ruler or governor. (See l. 41. li. 28. Deut. xxxiii. 5. Judg. xvii. 6. Dan. vii. 17.)

And the kings of the land of the Philistines, &c.] The Philistines had five lords over their several divisions (see Josh. xiii. 3. 1 Sam. vi. 6. and the foregoing note): each division having their particular prince or governor; (see Numb. xxxi. 8.) a custom still observed in the more rude and barbarous parts of the world.

Azzah.] A noted city of the Philistines, commonly rendered *Gaza*, according to the Greek pronunciation, which usually expresses the Hebrew letter *ain* by a *gamma.*

And the remnant of Ashdod.] Ashdod, or Azotus, was first besieged and taken by Tartan, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, xx. 1. afterward by Psammitichus, according to Herodotus, (lib. ii. cap. 157.) who so far ruined it, and impaired its ancient greatness, that it is here called *the remnant,* or poor remains, *of Ashdod.* (Compare xlvii. 4.)

Ver. 21, 22. *Edom and Moab.*] See chap. xlvii.—xlix.

Ver. 22. *And the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea.*] Or rather, *the region by the sea-side,* as the words are translated in the margin of our Bibles. For so the word *beneber* signifies, as hath been observed in the notes upon Isa. ix. 1. The phrase denotes the people living upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The word *island* in the Hebrew signifies any region or country. (See the note on Isa. xx. 6.)

Ver. 23. *Dedan, Tema, and Buz.*] These were Arabians, who descended from Abraham and his brother Nahor; (see Gen. xxii. 21. xxv. 3. 15.) whose destruction is foretold, Jer. xlix. 8. 28.

And all that are in the utmost corners.] See the notes on ix. 26.

Ver. 24. *And all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert.*] A mixture of people in that part of Arabia, properly called the *Desert,* consisting of the Nabatheans, Amalekites, Midianites, and other nations, called in Scripture by the general name of the *children of the east.* (See Judg. vi. 3. vii. 12. viii. 10.) So Diodor. Sic. lib. de Arabiâ Nabatæâ, αὐτὴ κεῖται μεταξὺ Συρίας τῆς Αἰγύπτου πολλοῖς δὲ καὶ παντοδαποῖς ἔθνεσι διείλεπται. *That part of Arabia is divided among several nations.* The learned Dr. Pocock is of opinion, that the word *Arabia* is derived from the Hebrew *Arab,* signifying *mixture:* because the country was inhabited by a medley of several nations. (See his notes upon Specim. Histor. Arab. p. 33.)

Ver. 25. *And all the kings of Zimri.*] A people of Arabia, descended from Zimram, Abraham's son by Keturah, (Gen. xxv. 2.)

And all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes.] See the note on xlix. 34. The Medes and Persians were commonly confederates, and partakers of the same good or ill fortune.

Ver. 26. *And all the kings of the north, far and near.*] The kings of Syria, and the neighbouring parts. (See xlix. 27.)

[*All the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth.*] This may only denote the kingdoms within the extent of the Babylonish empire; which called itself empress of the world. So Οἰκουμένη, in the New Testament, is put for the Roman empires. See Luke ii. 1.]

And the king of Sheshak shall drink after them.] By *Sheshak* is meant Babylon, as appears by comparing li. 41. Some think *Sac* was the name of an idol worshipped there, from whence the Hebrew name *Misael* was changed by the Chaldeans into *Meshak.* This idol gave the name of *Sacchæa* to a public festival celebrated at Babylon, and mentioned by Athenæus, lib. xiv. cap. 10. St. Jerome mentions upon the place a sort of cipher commonly used, which consisted in putting the last letter of the alphabet first, and so writing on; by which inverted order of the Hebrew letters *Sheshack* is equivalent to *Babel.* The prophets sometimes express the places they prophesy against by dark circumlocutions: so Babylon is called the *desert of the sea,* Isa. xxi. 1. Jerusalem, *the valley of vision,* Isa. xxi. 1. the Roman empire is expressed by *that which withholdeth,* 2 Thess. ii. 6. And some commentators suppose the names mentioned Micah i. 10, &c. to be names of noted places in Judea, disguised and altered from their true sound. Mr. Basnage, in his History of the Jews, b. iii. chap. 25. thinks that *Sheshack,* the victorious king of Egypt (the same who is called *Sesostris* by Herodotus), was afterward worshipped as a god over all the eastern countries which he subdued; and that Babylon is here represented by the name of this idol that was worshipped there. But it is not at all probable, that the Chaldeans should call their city or country by the name of a foreign conqueror, whose yoke they had long ago shook off.

Ver. 27. *Drink ye, and be drunken,* &c.] See ver. 16. The imperative is here put for the future. (See the like figure, Isa. ii. 9. vi. 9. xxiii. 16.)

Ver. 28. *And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand,* &c.] If they either do not believe thy threatenings, or else disregard them, as thinking themselves sufficiently provided against any hostile invasion, you shall

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let them know, that the judgments denounced against them are God's irreversible decree.

Ver. 29. *For, lo, I begin to bring evil upon the city that is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished?*] *Judgment* often *begins at the house of God,* for the correction of God's people, and to be a warning to others; but the heaviest strokes of it are reserved for the ungodly. (Compare xlix. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. Luke xxiii. 31.)

And should ye be utterly unpunished?] Concerning the import of the Hebrew phrase in this place, see the note on xxx. 11.

Ver. 30. *The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation.*] God speaks by his judgments; and those, when they are very terrible, may be fitly compared to the roaring of a lion, which strikes a consternation into those that hear it. (Compare Amos i. 2. iii. 8. Joel ii. 11. iii. 16.)

He shall mightily roar upon his habitation.] He shall pronounce and execute a terrible judgment upon his temple, the place on earth which he hath chose for his residence. (See 1 Kings viii. 29.) Upon which account, the same expressions are indifferently applied to heaven and the temple, as in this verse; and heaven itself is called God's temple or sanctuary. (See xvii. 12. Psal. xi. 4. cl. 1.) Some translate the latter part of this sentence to the same sense with the former: *from his habitation,* the preposition *nal* being sometimes the same with *menal, from.* (See Psal. lxxxi. 5. Dan. ii. 1. vi. 18.)

He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes.] *He shall utter his voice before his army,* as Joel expresses it, ii. 11. that is, like a leader or general, he shall encourage them to give the onset upon their enemies, which is usually performed with a shout, as great as that which the treaders of grapes use at the time of the vintage. (See xlviii. 33. Isa. xvi. 9.)

Ver. 31. *A noise* [of God's voice or judgment] *shall come unto the ends of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations.*] God enters into judgment with men for their impieties, as being so many injuries to his honour, and for which he demands satisfaction by his judgments. (Compare Hos. iv. 1. Micah vi. 2.)

He will plead with all flesh.] He will plead with them *with fire and sword,* as Isaiah expresses it, lxvi. 16.

Ver. 32. *And a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the ends of the earth.*] God's vengeance is often compared to a whirlwind. (See the note on xxiii. 19.) This the text says shall come from a far-distant country, as Chaldea was esteemed. (See v. 15.)

Ver. 33. *And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth, even to the other end of the earth.*] See the note on ver. 26. Or the words may be rendered, *from one end of the land to the other end of the land,* meaning Judea, the following words chiefly regarding that country.

They shall not be lamented.] See the note on xvi. 6.

Neither gathered, nor buried.] See the note on viii. 2.

Ver. 34. *Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock.*] The imperative is put for the future. (See ver. 27.) Shepherds are here the same with princes or generals. (See the note on ii. 8. vi. 3.) In pursuance of the same metaphor, by the *principal of the flock,* are meant the great and rich men of each nation, which is here prophesied against. Of them it is foretold, that they *shall wallow themselves in the ashes,* as a token of their great mourning and lamenting over their misfortunes. (See vi. 26.)

For the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are accomplished.] The time is come when you shall be either slaughtered or dispersed, and carried captive into foreign countries.

And ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.] Ye shall be utterly destroyed as a crystal glass, when it is dashed against the ground.

Ver. 36. *For the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.*] See the notes on vi. 2, 3.

Ver. 37. *And the peaceable habitations are cut down.*] Or, *destroyed:* in the Hebrew it is, *Neoth Shalem,* alluding to Salem, the same with Jerusalem.

Ver. 38. *He hath forsaken his covert as a lion,* &c.] As a lion forsakes his covert to go in quest of his prey, so God hath forsaken Jerusalem his habitation, from whence he used formerly to utter his voice like a lion, and exert his power for the defence of his people; (see Isa. xxxi. 4.) but now he hath made both city and country the object of his anger and judgments.

[*Because of the fierceness of the oppressor.*] The word *jonah,* rendered *oppressor,* signifies likewise a *dove:* so some understand the word as denoting the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who succeeded in that monarchy, who had that bird for a symbol of their nation given to them by Semiramis. (Compare xlvi. 16. see Selden, de Diis Syris, lib. ii. cap. 3.) Though it must be granted, the word is used where it cannot be understood of the Chaldeans. See l. 16. Zeph. iii. 1.]

CHAP. XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Jeremiah denouncing destruction to the city and temple, unless the people repented, is apprehended and arraigned before the great council, or Sanhedrin: upon which he makes his apology, and, after the debating the case by the judges of that court, he is acquitted.

Ver. 1. *IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.*] See the note on ver. 3.

Ver. 2. *Stand in the court of the Lord's house.*] See the note on xix. 4.

The great court was the place where both men and women did ordinarily worship, when they brought no sacrifice, saith Dr. Lightfoot, in his Description of the Temple, chap. 18. for when they offered a sacrifice, they were to bring it into the inner court, otherwise called the *court of Israel,* or of the priests, as the same learned author hath observed in his treatise concerning the Temple Service, chap. 8. sect. 1.

And speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house.] Archbishop Usher, in his Annals ad A. M. 3395. conjectures, that this was at the feast of tabernacles, when all the males were obliged to appear before the Lord, (Deut. xvi. 16.)

Diminish not a word.] Either out of fear, favour, or flattery.

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Ver. 3. *If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way,* &c.] See the note on xxxvi. 3.

Ver. 5. *To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets.*] See xxv. 4.

Ibid. and Ver. 6. *Rising up early and sending them—then will I make this house like Shiloh.*] See the notes on vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 6. *And I will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.*] See the note on xxiv. 9.

Ver. 7. *So the priests and the prophets.*] The Septuagint rightly understand the word of the false prophets, such as was Hananiah, mentioned chap. xxvii. (Compare xxix. 1. xxxvii. 19.) So the word prophet is taken, Hos. ix. 8.

In the house of the Lord.] That is, in the court before the house of the Lord, ver. 2. (Compare vii. 10.) The outer courts being holy ground, and dedicated to God's worship, are called by the name of the temple. So the treasury, where Christ preached, is called the temple, John viii. 20. though it stood in the outer court of it. St. Paul is said to have entered *into the temple,* that is, into the court before the temple, and the Jews to have laid hold on him there, Acts xxi. 26, 27.

Ver. 8. *Thou shalt surely die.*] As a disturber of the government, and a discourager of the people, from defending their country against the enemy. (Compare xxxviii. 4. and see the note on ver. 14. of this chapter.)

Ver. 10. *When the princes of Judah heard these things.*] These are the same who are called the *princes of the land,* ver. 17. The king's counsellors, or chief officers of state, who were likewise members of the great Sanhedrin. It is uncertain when the great council, called the Sanhedrin, was instituted. Selden, and most other writers from the Jewish authors, date the rise of it from Moses's appointing the seventy elders, Numb. xi. 16. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedriis, cap. 4. 16. Grotius in Matt. v. 22.) After several intermissions of this authority, which was sometimes laid aside by the calamities or corruptions of the times, or else superseded by that sovereign power which was invested in the judges and kings, Jehoshaphat, when he set about a general reformation, restored this ancient tribunal. (See 2 Chron. xix. 8.) This being the supreme court of the nation, the persons that sat in it are called here the *princes of Judah:* (compare xxix. 2. xxxiv. 19.) and the *elders of the land,* ver. 17. of this chapter; and the *elders of the people,* xix. 1. and in the evangelists, (see Matt. xxvii. 1. Luke xxii. 66.) and the *senate of the children of Israel,* Acts v. 21. (Compare 1 Mac. xii. 6. Judith xi. 14.) The same are probably meant by the *seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel,* mentioned Ezek. viii. 11. The word Sanhedrin is, without doubt, of Greek original, derived from Συνέδριον, which often signifies this great council in the New Testament; and from thence is adopted into the Jewish language by the rabbinical writers, as many other Greek words are; but the council may still have been of much ancienter date, and expressed in the Old Testament by *rulers, princes,* or *elders,* or *senate of the people.*

The new gate of the Lord's house.] The Chaldee calls it the *east gate of the sanctuary of the Lord.* It was called the *new gate,* because it was repaired by Jotham. (See 2 Kings xv. 35.)

Ver. 14. *As for me, behold, I am in your hand,* &c.] Compare xxxviii. 5. It was the proper business of the Sanhedrin to pass sentence upon prophets. And if they found them guilty of making false pretences to prophecy, to put them to death, the punishment which the law had provided in that case, (Deut. xviii. 20.) To this sense those words of Christ are to be understood, Luke xiii. 33. *It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem,* where the Sanhedrin sat, whose office it was first to try, and to condemn him.

Ver. 16. *Then said the princes.*] The Sanhedrin; (see ver. 17.) or at least some considerable men among them. (Compare ver. 21. xxxvi. 12. xxxvii. 15. xxxviii. 4.)

And all the people.] They who before were forward to condemn him, (ver. 8.) now, upon hearing his apology, were as ready to acquit him.

Ver. 17. *Then rose up certain of the elders of the land.*] See ver. 10. 16. From ver. 17. to the end of the chapter, are rehearsed the debates that passed in the Sanhedrin upon this subject, and the arguments offered on both sides; as St. Luke gives an account of a like conference with relation to the apostles, Acts v. 33, 34.

Ver. 18. *Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah,* &c.] They allege this precedent, taken from the practice of a good king, in favour of Jeremiah.

Zion shall be ploughed like a field.] The Jews suppose this prophecy to be fulfilled in the utter destruction of the second temple by Titus; when Terentius, or, as some of the modern Jews call him, Turnus Rufus, razed the very foundations of the city and temple, and so fulfilled the prediction of our Saviour, *that there should not be left one stone upon another.* (See Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 7.) When conquerors would signify their purpose, that a city should never be rebuilt, they used to break up the ground where it stood. (See Judg. ix. 45.) Horace alludes to this custom,

——" Imprimeretque muris
Hostile aratrum exercitus insolens."—Lib. i. Od. 16.

And the mountain of the house.] The temple stood upon Mount Moriah. (See 2 Chron. iv. 1. and xvii. 3. of this prophecy.)

Ver. 19. *Did Hezekiah and all Judah put him to death?*] Did the people come together in a body to accuse Micah, and demand sentence against him, as they had now done in the case of Jeremiah?

Did he not fear the Lord, &c.] See 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Ver. 20. *And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah,* &c.] This seems to be an instance alleged by others of the Sanhedrin, in favour of the priests and prophets, who were for condemning Jeremiah.

Ver. 22. *And Jehoiakim sent men into Egypt,* &c.] There was a strict alliance between him and Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 24.)

Ver. 23. *And cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.*] Thereby to put a mark of infamy upon him after his death, by burying him among the common people; for persons of quality and character had sepulchres belonging to their own families. (See 2 Sam. xvii. 23. 1 Kings ii. 24.)

Ver. 24. *Nevertheless the hand of Ahikim, the son of Shaphan, was with Jeremiah.*] Both he and his father Shaphan were chief ministers under Josiah, (2 Kings xxii. 12. 14.)

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And the brothers of Ahikam, Gemariah, Elasah, and Jaazaniah, were considerable men in those days with Ahikam, and members of the great council: (see Jer. xxix. 3. Ezek. viii. 11.) so Ahikam made use of his interest with them, to deliver Jeremiah from the danger that threatened him.

That they should not give him into the hand of the people.] The common people are inconstant in their opinions: they joined at first with Jeremiah's accusers; (ver. 10.) after hearing his apology, they took his part; (ver. 16.) but afterward, upon hearing the instance of Urijah alleged on the other side, they were incensed against him, and were zealous for putting him to death.

CHAP. XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This prophecy seems to have been uttered at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign (see the following note), and foreshews the conquest of Judea, and the neighbouring countries, by the king of Babylon, as was more largely set forth in the twenty-fifth chapter.

Ver. 1. *IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.*] There is a difficulty in the date of this prophecy, because it plainly relates to the times of Zedekiah. (See ver. 3. 12. 16.) Some suppose that Jeremiah might have it in charge to declare this decree of God's in the reign of king Jehoiakim, which yet he was not to execute, till the time of Zedekiah. Others think that the prophet did presently execute some part of his orders, *viz.* that of putting on bonds and yokes upon his neck, which he wore, during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah, till the fourth year of Zedekiah. There are other ways of solving this difficulty, which are less probable: but the answer which seems to me the least forced, is to say, that Jehoiakim is crept into the text, by the negligence of the scribes (who might have their eyes upon the beginning of the last chapter or section), instead of Zedekiah. This emendation is confirmed, by comparing this verse with the third, twelfth, and twentieth verses of this chapter, and with the beginning of the next. Such little verbal mistakes must be allowed by all impartial readers, to have sometimes happened in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, as well as in other books, and may easily be corrected, by comparing the suspected reading with other parts of the sacred text, which admit of no difficulty or uncertainty.

Ver. 2. *Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck.*] The prophets foreshewed things by actions as well as words. So Isaiah went *naked and barefoot*, (Isa. xx. 3.) Ezekiel prophesied in like manner by signs, (Ezek. iv. 1, &c. xii. 3. xxiv. 17. 19.)

Ver. 3. *And send them to the king of Edom*, &c.] These were some of those countries which God had given into the hand of the king of Babylon. (See xxv. 21, 22. and chap. xlviii. xlix.)

By the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah.] Their business was either to congratulate Zedekiah upon his accession to the throne; or else to engage him in a league against the king of Babylon.

Ver. 6. *And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.*] God is the sole lord and proprietor of the world, and, by virtue of his absolute sovereignty and dominion, has a right to give the kingdoms of the earth to whomsoever he pleases, (Dan. iv. 17.) and he exercises this authority, by *changing times and seasons*, by *removing kings, and setting up kings*, (ibid. ii. 21.) It is the business of human laws, to establish every government in that method wherein it is already settled: but as this is no bar to Providence, which still has a right to alter governments, and, for great and wise reasons, often changes the scene of worldly affairs; so neither ought it to be an objection against submitting to any persons, whom God's providence hath placed over us, and put into their hands the full power of exercising all those acts of government in which sovereignty consists. But although the people are bound in such cases to obey, yet this does not lessen the guilt of usurpers themselves. (See the note on xxv. 12.)

The king of Babylon my servant.] See the note on xxv. 9.

And the beasts of the field have I given also to him to serve him.] Compare Dan. ii. 38. An instance of that absolute sovereignty which God hath given to the king of Babylon, whereby men, and all their goods and fortunes, which chiefly consisted in cattle in those days, were entirely at his disposal.

Ver. 7. *And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son.*] Belshazzar, the last king of the Babylonian monarchy, (Dan. v. 30, 31.) was grandchild to Nebuchadnezzar, who is called his father, Dan. v. 2. that is, his grandfather, by a usual Hebraism. (See 1 Kings xv. 3. compared with ver. 10. and 2 Kings viii. 26. compared with ver. 18.) For the two kings mentioned in Ptolemy's Canon, between Evil-Merodach and Belshazzar (called there Nabonedus); *viz.* Neriglissarus and Laborosoarchodus, had no right by lineal descent: for Neriglissarus was only husband to Evil-Merodach's daughter, and Laborosoarchodus was son to Neriglissarus. Compare Isa. xiv. 22. where God saith, *I will cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, son and nephew*, or rather, *son and grandson;* that is, all that should lineally succeed king Nebuchadnezzar. (Compare Job xviii. 19.)

Until the very time of his land come.] The Vulgar Latin translates the words thus, *Until the time of his land, and of himself come; i. e.* The time of their punishment or visitation, as it is elsewhere expressed; that is, at the end of seventy years. (See xxv. 12.) The word *time* is used in the same sense, Ezek. vii. 7. xxx. 3.

And then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.] See xxvi. 14.

Ver. 8. *That will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon.*] Will not submit to that servitude represented by the yokes mentioned ver. 2, 3.

That nation will I punish—with the sword, &c.] Those punishments are elsewhere denounced against Zedekiah, and all the Jews who joined with him in resisting the king of Babylon's forces. (See xxiv. 9. xxxviii. 8. Ezek. xii. 13, 14. xvii. 20, 21.)

Ver. 9. *Therefore hearken ye not to your prophets, nor to your diviners*, &c.] The Jews, together with the idolatrous rites of their neighbours, learned their arts of divination, and foretelling future events, the use of which was expressly forbidden, Deut. xviii. 11, &c. and for which practices they are severely reproved, Isa. ii. 6. The word *nonen*, which is here translated *enchanter*, is rendered there

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soothsayer, and is supposed to be the same with a stargazer, or astrologer.

Ver. 10. *They prophesy a lie unto you.*] See xiv. 14. xxiii. 21. xxix. 8.

Ver. 11. *But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon—those will I let remain still in their own land*, &c.] They that make no opposition against the king of Babylon's forces, but willingly submit themselves to him, shall continue in their own country and possessions, being only tributaries to the king of Babylon. (See xxxviii. 17. xlii. 10, 11.)

Ver. 12. *I spake also to Zedekiah, king of Judah, according to all these words*, &c.] See the note on ver. 1. What the prophet saith here to Zedekiah, hath a particular weight in it, because he was made king of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar, and took an oath of being faithful to him, and never resisting his authority. (See xxxviii. 1. 2 Kings xxiv. 17. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Ezek. xvii. 15. 18.)

Ver. 16. *Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon.*] Several of the vessels belonging to the temple were carried away by the Chaldeans, in the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. 10. Dan. i. 2.)

Ver. 19. *For thus saith the Lord concerning the pillars*, &c.] See lii. 17. 20, 21.

Ver. 20. *Which Nebuchadnezzar took not when he carried away captive Jeconiah*, &c.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 13, 14.

They shall be carried to Babylon.] See 2 Kings xxv. 13. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18.

And there shall they be, until the day that I shall visit them.] Till the prefixed time of seventy years be expired, when I shall visit the iniquity of the Chaldeans upon them, and restore the Jews from their captivity. (See xxv. 11, 12. Ezra i. 7.)

CHAP. XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains an account of Hananiah's false prophecy, and the judgment Jeremiah denounced against him upon it; which accordingly came to pass.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah.*] This plainly refers to the time specified at the beginning of the last chapter, and confirms the conjecture there made, that Jehoiakim is put there by a mistake of the copies for Zedekiah.

In the fourth year.] There is a difficulty in the expression, how the prophet should call that the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, which was really the *fourth year* of it. Therefore Scaliger understands it of the fourth year in course, reckoning from the last sabbatical year, which we know was to be every seventh year, from Lev. xxv. 3, 4. (see his Canones Isagog. p. 294, 295.) and Kimchi speaks of it as a tradition received among the rabbins, that the temple was destroyed in a sabbatical year; which falling in with the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the first year of his reign must be the fourth in course from the last sabbatical. (See the notes on xxxiv. 1. 17.)

It is probable, that the observation of these sabbatical years had been intermitted for a great while before the captivity; but the king and people, warned by the prophet Jeremiah of their great neglect in this matter, had entered into a solemn covenant for the observing this part of the law. (See xxxiv. 8, &c.)

But after all, there is no ground for this solution of Scaliger's; for it is plain, that if they had any regard for this computation of time, the ninth year of Zedekiah was the sabbatical year. (See the forementioned place.)

To avoid this difficulty, Noldius translates the words to this sense, *When it had been so* [that is, when I had continued prophesying with a yoke about my neck from that year] *in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth year.* (See his Concordance, p. 143. 164.)

The LXX. read this part of the verse thus, *In the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month.*

Ver. 2. *I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.*] That tyrannical power which Nebuchadnezzar exercises, of which the bonds and yokes which Jeremiah wore, are the figures. (See xxxvi. 1. 12.)

Ver. 3. *Within two full years.*] See the note on ver. 16.

I will bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house.] See xxvii. 16. 20.

Ver. 4. *And I will bring again Jeconiah*, &c.] This was grateful news to the people, who looked upon Zedekiah only as Nebuchadnezzar's deputy, or viceroy. (See the note on xxvi. 12.)

Ver. 6. *Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen*, &c.] Thereby expressing his hearty concern for the good of his nation, and wishing that God would repent him of the evil wherewith he had threatened them by his ministry.

Ver. 8, 9. *The prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, prophesied both against many countries*, &c.] Jeremiah offers two several reasons in defence of his own prophecies, and against the truth of Hananiah's. First, that many other prophets agreed with himself in prophesying evil against the Jews, and other neighbouring countries, such as Hosea, Joel, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, &c. Whereas Hananiah, being single in his prophecy, nothing but the punctual answering the event could give him the authority of a true prophet. Secondly, that considering the general corruption of the people's manners, it was so much the more likely God should inflict severe punishments upon them, their iniquities being now ripe for judgment. To this the Jews add a third explication of the words, *viz.* that when a true prophet foretells peace, his prophecy must certainly be fulfilled, and the event would prove him to be a true prophet; whereas when a prophet foretold evil, which was Jeremiah's case, the event might be suspended by the repentance of the persons concerned. (See Bishop Kidder's Dem. of the Messias, par. i. p. 377.)

Ver. 10. *Then Hananiah took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck.*] See xxvii. 2.

Ver. 11. *From the neck of all nations.*] See ibid. ver. 7.

Ver. 13. *But thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.*] Such as no human strength can break: to signify that no human force shall be able to cope with the king of Babylon.

Ver. 14. *I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations*, &c.] He renews in stronger terms the prophecy that he delivered before, xxvii. 6, 7.

Ver. 16. *This year thou shalt die.*] As Hananiah limited

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the accomplishment of his prophecy to the space of *two years*, (ver. 3.) to gain credit with the people, by such a punctual prediction; so Jeremiah confines the trial of his veracity to a much shorter time: and the event exactly answering, evidently shewed the falsehood of the other's pretences.

Because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.] Thou hast taught the people to disbelieve his word, and to act contrary to his decrees.

Ver. 17. *In the seventh month.*] Two months after he had uttered his false prophecy. (See ver. 1.)

CHAP. XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains a message sent by Jeremiah, at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, to the captives in Babylon, who were carried away with Jeconiah, exhorting them to live quietly there, and not hearken to the prophets among them, who deluded them with vain hopes of a speedy return home: against two of which prophecies he denounces God's judgments; as he did afterward against Shemaiah, who sent a threatening letter against Jeremiah, at the return of those very messengers who carried this letter to Babylon.

Ver. 1. *THESE are the words of the letter that Jeremiah sent unto the residue of the elders that were carried away captives.*] These were probably those that survived of the Sanhedrin, that were carried away captive in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, (Dan. i. 3.) or else who remained of Jeconiah's captivity; (see 2 Kings xxiv. 14.) many of whom might die by the hardships they suffered in their transportation. These being persons of authority, were more likely to influence the rest of the people, and induce them to hearken to the prophet's advice.

And to the prophets.] We do not read of any true prophet that was carried away captive with Jeconiah, beside Ezekiel. So the Septuagint rightly understand the word here of false prophets, who flattered the people with hopes of a speedy restoration. (See xxvi. 7. xxxviii. 19.) So Hananiah is often called the *prophet*, in the foregoing chapter; and compare ver. 8. of this chapter.

Ver. 2. *After that Jeconiah, the queen,* &c.] By the *queen* is meant Jeconiah's mother. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 12, 14, 15. where an account is given of this captivity; and compare xxii. 26. xxvii. 10. xxviii. 4. of this prophecy.)

And the eunuchs.] See xxxiv. 19.

The princes of Judah and Jerusalem.] If these be persons of a distinct rank, we may understand the princes of Judah to be the same with the elders, or Sanhedrin, ver. 1. (Compare xxvi. 10. 16, 17. xxxiv. 19.) By the *princes of Jerusalem* are meant the rulers of that city, called the lesser Sanhedrin, consisting of twenty-three.

Ver. 3. *By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan.*] See the note on xxvi. 24.

And Gemariah the son of Hilkiah.] A distinct person from Gemariah, mentioned xxxvi. 10.

Whom Zedekiah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar.] To renew his promises of fidelity to him. (See the note on xxvii. 3. 12.)

Ver. 5, 6. *Build ye houses, and dwell in them,* &c.] The prophet gives them this advice to check their hopes of a speedy return from Babylon, with which the false prophets flattered them. (See ver. 8. 28.)

Ver. 7. *And seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives: and pray unto the Lord for it.*] It is the duty of all private persons to submit to the government that protects them, and to pray for the prosperity of it. (See Ezra vi. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.) And if they are persecutors or enemies to the truth, they are to leave it to God to execute upon them the judgments he has denounced against tyrants and oppressors: which threatenings the Jews expected God would execute upon Babylon in due time. (See Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9.)

Ver. 8. *Neither hearken to the dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.*] Which you encourage your false prophets to pretend to.

Ver. 10. *After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you.*] These seventy years of the captivity are to be computed from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which, in the Scripture account, is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. (See the notes on xxv. 1. 11.)

I will visit you.] There were but few in comparison of those captives, that returned in person into their own country. (See Ezra iii. 12.) So this promise was chiefly fulfilled in their posterity; and it is common in Scripture to speak of blessings bestowed upon the children, as if they had been actually made good to their progenitors. (See xxxii. 5. and compare Exod. vi. 4. Micah vii. 20.)

Ver. 12. *Then shall ye call upon me—and I will hearken unto you.*] A sure token of God's favour, (see xxxiii. 3.) as his rejecting men, and casting them off, is expressed by his *hiding his face from them*, and refusing to hear their prayers. (See xiv. 12. Lam. iii. 8. 44.)

Ver. 13. *And ye shall seek me and find me,* &c.] According to the promises made, Lev. xxvi. 39, 40. Deut. xxx. 1. Psal. xxxii. 6.

Ver. 14. *And I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you,* &c.] These words are directly spoken to those that were carried captives with Jeconiah, and were fulfilled in their restoration under Cyrus: yet the expressions being so large and general, may be supposed ro relate to that general restoration of the whole nation, which is often foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament. (See xxiii. 3. 8. xxxii. 37. and the notes there.)

Ver. 15. *Because ye say, The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon.*] This is meant of the false prophets, who foretold nothing but peace and prosperity. (See ver. 8. 21.)

Ver. 16—18. *Know ye, that thus saith the Lord of the king—and all the people,* &c.] See xxiv. 8. 10.

Ver. 19. *Because they have not hearkened to my words, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets.*] When at the same time they readily gave ear to the false prophets, that flattered them with promises of peace and safety. (See xiv. 14. xxvii. 15. xxviii. 2.)

Ver. 21. *And he shall slay them before your eyes.*] As persons that disturbed the minds of the Jews, his subjects, and made them unwilling to submit to his government, by giving them hopes of a speedy deliverance from under it. (See ver. 7, 8.)

Ver. 22. *And of them shall be taken up a curse.*] See the note on xxiv. 9.

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Whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.] Casting into the fire was a punishment used in that country, as appears from the history of the three children, Dan. iii. There was likewise a way of roasting by a gentle fire, to make men die by a more lingering death, such as Antiochus practised upon the seven brethren; (2 Mac. vii. 5.) and was often used in the Dioclesian persecution, as Lactantius describes it, de Mortib. Persecutorum, cap. 21. The word here properly denotes this sort of punishment.

Ver. 23. *Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives.*] Compare xxiii. 14. The Jewish writers will needs have these to have been the two elders that attempted Susannah's chastity. For they have a traditional account of that story; though they do not look upon the history of it, that is still extant in the Greek, to be authentic.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt also speak unto Shamaiah the Nehelamite.*] Or, *the dreamer*, as the word is rendered in the margin. (See ver. 8.) This was done after the messengers who delivered the former message to the captives at Babylon were returned home, who brought along with them the letter of Shemaiah mentioned in the following verse. (See ver. 27.)

Ver. 25. *And to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest.*] See the note on xxi. 1.

Ver. 26. *The Lord hath made thee priest instead of Jehoiada the priest.*] Shemaiah directs the words of his letter to Zephaniah, in the first place, as being next in order to the high-priest, and therefore called the *second priest*, lii. 24. and tells him, that God has appointed him to supply the place of the high-priest, being probably absent at that time, who was either Azariah, or Seraiah his son; but might be called by the name of Jehoiada, a person so remarkable for his zeal and courage, 2 Chron. xxxiii. xxxiv.

It is certain, some of the high-priests had several names, as is taken for granted frequently by Selden, Lightfoot, and other learned men, who have endeavoured to give us an account of their succession, out of the histories of the Kings and Chronicles. (See Selden, de Success. in Pontificat. lib. i. cap. 5. Lightfoot's Temple Service, chap. 4.)

That ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet.] See xx. 1, 2. and the note there. The prophets and inspired persons, were often accused of madness, or being possessed with an evil spirit, by their enemies. (See 2 Kings ix. 11. Hos. ix. 7. John x. 20. Acts xxvi. 24.)

Ver. 27. *For therefore* [or *because*, see Noldius, p. 728.] *he sent unto us in Babylon.*] See ver. 5.

Ver. 32. *He shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people.*] None of his posterity shall remain to see my people restored to their own land again. (Compare ver. 11.)

Because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord.] See xxviii. 16.

CHAP. XXX.

ARGUMENT.

This and the following chapter contain general promises of God's mercy to the Jews, and assurances that he will never forget the covenant that he made with their fathers: those were partly fulfilled in their restoration under Cyrus, but more fully to be accomplished in the times of the Messias; and by the gracious terms of that new covenant, which he will establish with the spiritual Israel. At, or before, whose second appearing, we may expect a general conversion and restoration of God's ancient people: a blessing implied in those prophecies of the Old Testament, where the joint restoration of Israel and Judah is foretold: as has been observed upon Isa. xi. 11. 13.

Ver. 2. *WRITE thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.*] The words that follow contain a promise of the Jews' restoration from their captivity. (Compare ver. 4.) These God commands should be committed to writing for the use of posterity, to be a support to the Jews, and an encouragement for them to trust in God, and a proof of God's prescience and overruling providence, when the event shall be brought to pass. (See the note on xxii. 30.)

Ver. 3. *I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah.*] Israel and Judah having been carried away by two distinct captives, into different parts of the world, several prophecies of the Old Testament not only foretell the restoration of each of them, but likewise their reunion after their restoration. (See above, iii. 18. Ezek. xxxvii. 6. 21, 22. Hos. i. 11.) Now, though it be granted that some of every tribe did return to their own country under Cyrus and Artaxerxes, and are therefore called by the name of *all Israel*, (Ezra ii. 73. vi. 17. vii. 13. x. 5. Nehem. xii. 47.) yet the far greatest part of these were of Judah and Benjamin, together with the Levites. (See Ezra i. 5.) So that it is a great question what is become of the main body of the ten tribes, which Shalmaneser carried away into Assyria, and the neighbouring countries: from all which we may infer, that this and the like prophecies of the Old Testament refer to a farther restoration of the Jews that is yet to come.

Ver. 5. *We have heard the voice of trembling.*] Such a one as discovers great fear, and apprehensions of impending evils.

Ver. 6. *Ask ye now, and see, whether a man doth travail with child,* &c.] All men seem to carry that concern in their looks, and discover such an uneasiness in their behaviour, under their apprehension of approaching evils, as women do when the time of their travail draws near. (Compare vi. 24. Nahum ii. 10.)

Ver. 7. *Alas! for that day, for it is great, so that there is none like it,* &c.] The word *day* often comprehends a succession of time, in which a whole series of events is transacted: so it here contains the whole time of the siege and taking of Jerusalem, the destruction of the city and temple, and the carrying away the people captive. This is described as a time of great tribulation, in which it was an earnest of the day of judgment, called the *great and terrible day of the Lord*, Joel ii. 31.

Ver. 8. *For it shall come to pass, saith the Lord, that in that day I will break his yoke from off thy neck.*] In the day when Jacob shall be saved out of all his troubles, (ver. 7.) The phrase *that day* often denotes an extraordinary or remarkable time, for some signal events of Providence. (See the note on Isa. iv. 2.)

And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.] This promise has not yet received its accomplishment: since, after the return of the Jews under Cyrus, they were

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reduced into servitude by the Greeks and Romans; and at present there is no place in the world where they can be said to be their own masters.

Ver. 9. *But they shall serve the Lord their God.*] They shall steadily adhere to the true religion and service of God, expressed elsewhere thus, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (See ver. 22.)

And David their king.] That is, the Messias, who is often called by the name of David in the prophets, as the person in whom all the promises made to David were to be fulfilled. (See Isa. lv. 3, 4. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5.)

Whom I will raise up unto them.] An expression elsewhere used by the holy writers, when they speak of the coming of Christ. (See Luke i. 69. Acts ii. 30. xiii. 23.)

Ver. 10. *Therefore fear not, O my servant Jacob,* &c.] As if God had utterly forsaken thee, or cast thee off. (Compare Isa. xli. 15. xliv. 2.)

For, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity.] I will deliver thee from thy captivity, though thou shouldest be dispersed into the most distant countries: and this, though it be not accomplished in the Jews of the present age, shall be made good to their posterity, who *are beloved for their fathers' sake,* as St. Paul speaks, Rom. xi. 28. National blessings are promised in common to parents and children, who, as they are called promiscuously by the same name, as Jacob here denotes his posterity: so they are looked upon in such cases as one aggregate body, or race of people. (See the note on xxix. 10.)

And Israel shall be in rest and quiet, and none shall make him afraid.] These expressions denote external peace and freedom from the annoyance of enemies, as hath been observed upon xxiii. 6.

Ver. 11. *Though I make an end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee.*] Such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, &c. yet I will not make a full end of thee. (See the note on xxxi. 36.)

But I will correct thee in measure, [see x. 24.] *and not leave thee altogether unpunished.*] This latter part of the verse some render, *and not utterly destroy thee:* which sense, as it suits very well with this place, so it agrees much better with the scope of those two texts in the Pentateuch, where we first meet with it, Exod. xxxiv. 7. and Numb. xiv. 18. than the common translation, which renders the words there, *and will by no means acquit* the guilty.

The sense which our translation gives here of this phrase, *I will not leave thee altogether unpunished,* agrees very well with the context of some other places, where this phrase is used, as particularly xxv. 29. xlix. 12. of this prophecy; as also Nahum i. 3.

Ver. 12. *For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable,* &c.] In all human appearance, and therefore it is none but God can heal thee, and recover thee out of this desperate condition.

Ver. 13. *There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up.*] There is none that, by the reformation of their lives, or their intercessions with God, endeavour to avert his displeasure. (See Ezek. xxii. 30.) Or else the words may be rendered, *There is none to judge thy cause.* (See vi. 28. xxii. 6.) None knows the true nature of thy malady, or what medicines are fit to be applied to thy case. Their calamitous state is compared to a distempered body; (see ver. 17. viii. 22. Isa. i. 5, 6.) and the false prophets, instead of applying proper remedies, *have healed the wounds of my people slightly;* as we read, vi. 14.

Ver. 14. *All thy lovers have forgotten thee.*] See xxii. 20. 22.

For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, &c.] Thy iniquities have provoked me to punish thee with that severity, as looks like cruelty, and as if I had declared myself an utter enemy to thee.

Ver. 15. *Why criest thou for thine affliction,* &c.] Yet why shouldest thou expostulate with me, as if I had dealt unjustly with thee? Whereas, if thy condition seems desperate, it is owing to thine own iniquities, which have still been increased with new aggravations of guilt.

Ver. 16. *Therefore* [or *yet surely,* see the note on xvi. 14.] *all they that devour thee shall be devoured,* &c.] See ver. 11. Isa. xxxiii. 1.

Ver. 17. *For I will restore health unto thee,* &c.] See ver. 12, 13.

Ver. 18. *I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents.*] The expression alludes to the ancient custom of dwelling in tents, or tabernacles. (Compare Isa. xxxiii. 20. liv. 2.) This was in some degree fulfilled under Zerubbabel.

And the city shall be built upon her own heap.] Or *hill,* as it is in the margin, as that part of Jerusalem particularly was, which was called Mount Zion. And generally there was a castle or citadel in the middle of the ancient cities, upon a rising ground, for the greater strength and security of the place. (See Josh. xi. 13.)

And the palace shall remain [or *be placed*] *after the manner thereof.*] By the palace may be understood, either the temple or the king's house; which the prophet foretells shall be built upon its former foundation and dimensions.

Ver. 19. *And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving,* &c.] See xxxi. 4. 13. 18. xxxiii. 11. Zech. x. 8.

Ver. 20. *Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me.*] Their church and commonwealth shall be restored to their former state. (Compare xxxiii. 7. 11. Isa. i. 27.)

Ver. 21. *And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governors shall proceed from the midst of them.*] The Hebrew word *addiro* is in the singular number, and literally signifies their *mighty one,* a title given to God himself, Psal. xciii. 4. and to a mighty angel, Isa. x. 34. probably the Λόγος, or Son of God. The sense is, they shall be no more governed by strangers, but shall have a ruler of their own nation; such as was Zerubbabel, a figure of Christ.

And I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach to me.] He shall have a near attendance upon me: for I will make him a priest to me as well as a king, according to that prophecy concerning the Messiah, Psal. cx. 4. *Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* This phrase of *coming,* or *drawing near,* to God, is particularly applied to the office of the priests and Levites, Numb. xvi. 5.

For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.] For who is there but the Messias, that is so entirely devoted to my service? (See Psal. xl. 8.

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John iv. 34. xiv. 31.) The words *mihû zé, who is this,* have an emphasis in the original, that cannot be expressed in another language, and are spoken by way of admiration: the very same phrase is used Psal. xxiv. 10. where the altering the phrase from that which was used in the eighth verse is designed to denote some extraordinary person, and is generally expounded of the Messias.

Ver. 22. *And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*] You shall continually adhere to my religion and worship, and I will take you into my favour and protection. (See Ezek. xi. 24. xxxvi. 26. xxxvii. 27. Hos. ii. 23. Zech. xiii. 9. Rev. xxi. 3.)

Ver. 23, 24. *Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury,* &c.] We find the same judgment denounced xxiii. 19, 20. And with respect to the context here, and the *latter days,* to which it does particularly relate, it may best be explained with regard to the general conversion of the Jews, when God will make a remarkable discrimination among them; will bring back those that repent and believe into their own country, and punish the refractory with utter destruction, as he did the rebels in the wilderness. (See Ezek. xi. 17. 21. xx. 34. 38. and the notes upon Isa. iv. 11. lxv. 12.)

Ver. 24. *The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return.*] See the note on xxiii. 20.

In the latter days ye shall consider [or *understand*] *it.*] The *latter days,* or *last days,* as the phrase is sometimes translated, may signify, in general, the time to come; and so perhaps it is to be understood Gen. xlix. 1. Deut. iv. 30. xxxi. 29. but it commonly signifies the times under the gospel, as being the last dispensation, and such as should continue to the end of the world. (See the note on Isa. ii. 2.) And taking the phrase in this sense, the words import, that when all these evils are come upon you, which God has threatened against your disobedience, and particularly for that heinous sin of yours in rejecting the Messias: and you have found the denunciations of the prophets verified in the several captivities you have undergone; then you will understand the import of this and several other prophecies, and the event will perfectly instruct you in their meaning. (See xxiii. 20.)

CHAP. XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

See the Argument of the foregoing chapter, the same subject being continued in this: together with a more explicit declaration of the nature and terms of that new covenant which God will reveal by Christ.

Ver. 1. *AT the same time.*] In the *latter days,* mentioned xxx. 24.

I will be the God of all the families of Israel, &c.] See xxx. 22.

Ver. 2. *The people that were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness,* &c.] I saved the Israelites from that terrible destruction designed against them by their persecutors, Pharaoh, the Amalekites, and Amorites: I led them in the wilderness, and took care for them that they wanted for nothing, in a place destitute of all conveniences of life: I went before them in a pillar of cloud, to mark out a place for them where they should pitch their tents: (compare Numb. x. 33. Deut. i. 33.) I conducted them to the land that I had provided for them: (see Deut. xii. 9. Psal. xcv. 11.) and after such evidences of my kindness to them, how can they doubt of the continuance of my favours?

Ver. 3. *The Lord hath appeared of old unto me.*] These words are spoken in the person of the Jewish nation, the people spoken of in the foregoing verse.

Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.] The mercies I promised you when I made the covenant with your fathers shall never fail; *for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,* (Rom. xi. 29.)

Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.] I have took all opportunities of bringing thee to myself by preventing acts of grace and mercy. The word *draw* is used in Scripture of God's preventing grace. (See Cant. i. 4. Hos. xi. 4. John vi. 44.)

Ver. 4. *Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel.*] Thy inhabitants shall be again restored to thee, who shall rebuild their cities and habitations, that lay desolate during the time of their captivity. (See xxxiii. 7.) The Jews have the title of *virgin of Israel* bestowed upon them, to imply that, by their repentance and reformation, they have washed away the stains of their former idolatries, so often compared to whoredom in the Scriptures. (See the note on xviii. 13.)

The *virgin of Israel* is of the same extent with *all the families of Israel,* (ver. 1.) For the blessings here promised shall receive their utmost completion, when Israel and Judah shall again be united into one people. (See ver. 31. and the notes upon xxx. 3.)

Thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and go forth in the dances of them that make merry.] All the signs both of religious and civil joy shall be restored to thee. (See Exod. xv. 20. Psal. cxlix. 3. Judg. xi. 34.)

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria.*] Building and planting are commonly joined together. (See Isa. lxv. 21. Amos ix. 14.) Samaria, being the metropolis of the ten tribes, seems to be put for the kingdom of Israel, as it was distinct from that of Judah, expressed often by Samaria in the books of Kings. According to which interpretation, the *mountains of Samaria* are equivalent to the *mountains of Israel,* (Ezek. xxxvi. 8. xxxvii. 22.) Taking Samaria in this sense, it implies, that the deliverance here spoken of shall extend to Israel as well as Judah. (See ver. 6. and the Argument on chap. xxx.)

The planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.] After they have planted them, they shall eat the fruits thereof, according to the promise contained in the parallel texts, Isa. lxv. 21. Amos ix. 14. Whereas God had threatened them as a curse, that when they had *planted their vines, another should eat the fruit,* Deut. xxviii. 30. The verb *hillelu,* translated *eat them as common things,* alludes to that law that forbade the fruit of any young trees to be eaten, till the fifth year of their bearing, when the fruit was lawful, or *common,* for every one to eat. (See the margin of our Bibles upon Deut. xx. 6. xxviii. 30.)

Ver. 6. *For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye,* &c.] They that were to publish any proclamation used to get to the top of some high hill, from whence their voice might be heard a great way off. (See Judg. ix. 7. 2 Chron. xiii. 4. Isa. xl. 9.) Watchmen gave the same kind of warning if they saw an

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enemy approach, which is now done more commonly by beacons. The Jews took much the same method in proclaiming their festivals: (see Dr. Lightfoot's Temple Service, chap. 11.) in allusion to which customs the prophet here saith, that the time shall come when there shall be a general summons throughout all the ten tribes (Ephraim being often put for the whole kingdom of Israel; see the note on Isa. vii. 2.) to repair to the temple at Jerusalem, and join themselves to the true church, from which they had made so long a separation.

When the prophets foretell the general conversion of the Jews, they often speak of Judah and Israel as no longer in a state of separation, but united together under one king, the Messias. (See above, iii. 18. xxx. 3. Isa. xi. 13. Ezek. xxxvi. 6. 22. Hos. ii. 11.) The expressions *arise ye*, &c. allude to the Jews going in companies to Jerusalem, at the three solemn feasts of the year. (See Isa. ii. 3. and the notes there.) The prophets being styled *watchmen*, (see vi. 17.) the word may be applied to those evangelical preachers, who should be instruments in converting the Jews, and bringing them into the church. And the word *Notzerim* may allude, as Grotius observes, to the title of *Nazarene*, given to Christ and his disciples at the first preaching of Christianity. (See Matt. ii. 23. Acts xxiv. 5.) We find that names often carry some mystical allusion in them, by several instances of Scripture, and particularly Jacob's blessings to his sons do, for the most part, allude to their proper names, (Gen. xlix.)

Ver. 7. *Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chiefs of the nations.*] When you see some dawning of these blessed times, express your joy for the restoration of Jacob's posterity in the most public manner that can be, in the sight of the chiefest of those potent nations from whence you are to be delivered. (See ver. 11.) The phrase which we translate, *among the chief of the nations*, may otherwise be rendered, *in the sight of the nations.*

Publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.] Publish those good tidings with the highest expressions of praise and glory to God; and likewise pray that God, who hath begun so glorious a work, would go on to complete and perfect it. (Compare Psal. cxviii. 25.)

Ver. 8. *Behold, I will bring them from the north country*, &c.] This promise relates to the ten tribes, as well as to the other two who were carried captive to Babylon; for Assyria and Media, whither they were removed, lay north of Judea, as well as Babylon. (Compare iii. 12. 18.) And the following words speak of a general restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions. (See xxiii. 8.)

And with them the blind and the lame, and the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together, &c.] God will conduct them with all imaginable care and tenderness, and furnish the most feeble and indigent with suitable accommodations. The words allude to God's conducting his people of all ages and conditions through the wilderness, compared to the care with which a parent or a nurse carries a tender child, Deut. i. 31. (Compare Isa. xl. 11. xli. 18. xlix. 10.)

Ver. 9. *They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them.*] The Septuagint render the words thus, *They went forth with weeping, but with comfort will I bring them back:* which sense exactly agrees with the words of the hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm, which was composed upon the return from captivity: (ver. 5, 6.) *He that sows in tears, shall reap in joy: he that goeth forth weeping, shall come again with rejoicing.* But I conceive the sense which our translators give of the words more agreeable to the original: and it is withal confirmed, by comparing this verse with iii. 21. where we read, *A voice was heard, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel:* the prophet speaking upon the same subject, and in the same words which are here made use of. Compare likewise l. 4. where it is said, that *the children of Israel and Judah shall come together, going and weeping—and seek the Lord their God:* implying that the Jews, at the time of their general restoration, shall have their joy tempered with tears of repentance for their former miscarriages. The same thing is more fully expressed Zech. xiii. 10. where God promises to *pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplications:* the Hebrew word is *tahanunim*, the same which is used here in the text.

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters.] So that they shall not be afflicted with thirst, or want of any accommodation in their journey. The words allude to God's miraculously supplying the Israelites with water in the wilderness. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 6, 7. xli. 17, 18. xlix. 10.)

In a straight way wherein they shall not stumble.] This phrase is an allusion to God's leading the Israelites through the Red Sea, and afterward in the wilderness. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 8. xlii. 16. xlix. 11. lxiii. 13.)

For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.] Ephraim is often equivalent to Israel; especially when Israel denotes the ten tribes, as distinct from Judah. (See ver. 6.) God calls himself Israel's father here; (see iii. 4. 19. Deut. xxxii. 6. 1 Chron. xxix. 10. Isa. lxiii. 16.) and Ephraim the first-born among the tribes of Israel: because the birth-right which Reuben had forfeited, was conferred upon the two sons of Joseph, of whom Ephraim had the precedence. (See Gen. xlviii. 20. 1 Chron. v. 1.) This implies that God will restore the nation of the Jews to their primitive state, as it stood before their separation into two kingdoms. (See the note upon ver. 6.)

Ver. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off.*] The Jews call all countries islands, which they go to by sea: so the isles are the same with the gentiles, or heathen nations. (See Isa. xli. 1. xliv. 5. 10. 12. xlix. 1. li. 5. lx. 9. lxvi. 19.)

He that scattered Israel will gather him.] He that hath dispersed the Jewish nation over all parts of the earth, will again gather them into one body or people. (Isa. xi. 12. xxvii. 12. liv. 7.)

And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.] As God's care over his people is often resembled to that of the shepherd: (see Psal. xxiii. 1. lxxx. 1.) so the office of the Messias is described under the same character, (Isa. xl. 11.) and particularly with respect to the Jews after their conversion and restoration. (See Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24.)

Ver. 11. *And ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.*] From those who had by force and power conquered him, and detained him captive. (See Isa. xlix. 24, 25.) An emblem of that redemption which Christ will obtain for us by vanquishing the devil, called the *strong one* in Scripture. (See Matt. xii. 29. Luke xi. 21, 22.)

Ver. 12. *Therefore they shall come and sing in the height*

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of Zion.] Or, *They shall come singing to the height of Zion.* (See the note on ver. 6.) By the *height of Zion*, is meant the temple built upon a hill, adjoining to Mount Zion: (compare Ezek. xvii. 23. xx. 40.) and it is here taken metaphorically, as it is frequently in the prophetical writings, for the church, which is compared by Christ to a *city set on a hill*, (Matt. v. 14.) as being remarkable for the excellency of its laws and institutions. (See the note on Isa. ii. 2.)

And shall flow to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, &c.] Spiritual blessings are elsewhere described under the emblems of fruitfulness and plenty. (See the note on Isa. iv. 2.)

And their soul shall be as a watered garden.] God's grace and blessing are often compared to waters that refresh and enrich dry ground. (See Isa. xliv. 3. lviii. 11.)

And they shall not sorrow any more at all.] Compare Isa. xxxv. 11. lxv. 19. Rev. xxi. 4. Taking this promise in its full extent, it implies a happiness too great to be expected, while the present state of things continues.

Ver. 13. *Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together.*] There shall be signs of a universal joy, which all ages shall unanimously join in. (See ver. 4.)

Ver. 14. *And I will satiate the soul of the priest with fatness.*] The expression alludes to that plentiful provision that was made for the priests under the law, who were maintained by the sacrifices and offerings brought to the temple. (See 1 Sam. ii. 28.) And the whole verse implies, that both the priests and people shall rejoice in the abundance of God's blessings. (Compare Psal. cxxxii. 16.)

Ver. 15. *A voice was heard in Ramah—Rachel weeping for her children.*] The prophet describes the lamentations in and about Jerusalem, at the time of the several captivities mentioned lii. 15. 28—30. under the resemblance of a mother lamenting over her dead children. The mournful scene is laid in Ramah, in the land of Benjamin, not far from Jerusalem: (see Judg. xix. 10. 13.) part of that city itself being in the tribe of Benjamin. (See vi. 1.) And Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, is introduced as chief mourner upon so sad an occasion.

This figurative representation was, in a great measure, literally true, when Herod slew the infants at Beth-lehem, not far from Ramah (see the forementioned place in Judges); and therefore St. Matthew tells us, that this prophecy was fulfilled in that event, ii. 17, 18. Several other instances may be alleged, where the mystical sense of the prophecies, or that which relates to the times of the gospel, is the interpretation that most exactly answers the natural and genuine import of the words. This particularly appears in those prophecies concerning Christ's sufferings, contained in the twenty-second and sixty-ninth Psalms. If David's afflictions were the occasion of penning those Psalms, yet it is plain that the literal sense of several passages of those Psalms was never fulfilled in him.

Because they were not.] An expression denoting those who were dead, as being cut off from the land of the living, and excluded from any farther concern in the things of this world. (See Gen. xlii. 13. Lam. v. 7.) This was literally true, according to St. Matthew's interpretation of the text, but only metaphorically so in the sense that was first intended; being spoken of those who were removed into a foreign country, and for ever deprived of the conversation of their relations, as if they had been naturally dead.

Ver. 16. *For thy work shall be rewarded.*] God will have a regard for the tender affection which the mothers bear to their children. Their prayers and tears shall be heard and accepted by him.

Ver. 17. *And there is hope in thine end*, &c.] Or, *to thy posterity*, as the word in the original may be rendered: though these of the present age do not see a return from captivity, yet their posterity shall enjoy that blessing. This was particularly fulfilled with respect to the tribe of Benjamin in their return under Cyrus. (See Ezra i. 5.)

Ver. 18. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus.*] Or, *When he was led into captivity, saying thus:* so the word *mithnoded* signifies, xlviii. 27. and in this sense the Vulgar Latin understands it here.

Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.] Or, I was instructed by thy discipline: whereas, before, I was as an untamed bullock or heifer, that is not to be managed but by stripes and corrections.

Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.] Do thou turn my heart by thy preventing grace, and then I shall be effectually reformed. (Compare Lam. v. 21.) Sometimes the Scripture ascribes the whole work of man's conversion to God, because his grace is the first and principal cause of it. But yet to make it effectual, man's concurrence is necessary, as appears particularly from those words, l. 9. of this prophecy; where God saith, *We have healed Babylon, but she is not healed:* that is, God did what was requisite on his part for her conversion, but she refused to comply with his call. To the same purpose he speaks to Jerusalem, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.*

Ver. 19. *Surely after I was turned I repented*, &c.] As soon as God's grace touched my heart, and gave me a due sense of my duty, and the many deviations from it I had been guilty of, I straightway became a true penitent, and expressed my repentance, by all the outward and inward signs of an unfeigned sorrow.

Because I did bear the reproach of my youth.] The burden of my former sins lay heavy upon my mind, and I became sensible, that all the calamities and reproaches I have undergone, were the due deserts of my offences. The prophet, representing a whole nation as a single person, speaks of their former sins, as if they were the extravagances of their younger years.

Ver. 20. *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?*] The interrogative particle *he*, is in sense the same with *halo:* and so it is plainly taken, 1 Sam. iii. 27. which place should be translated, *Did not I plainly appear to thy father's house*, &c. and 2 Sam. xxiii. 17. where our English translators render it to the same sense, *Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?* Taking that particle in this sense, the text here should be rendered, *Is not Ephraim my dear son? is he not a pleasant child?* that is, Is he not one that I have set my affections upon, as a parent does upon a child in whom he delights?

For since I spake against him [or *of him*, see xlviii. 27.] *I do earnestly remember him still.*] Ever since I have so se-

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verely reproved and chastised him, I have still retained a fatherly kindness and affection for him.

Therefore my bowels are troubled for him.] Or, *yearn upon him;* I am moved with pity and compassion towards him, just as parents sympathize with the calamities of their children: (compare Isa. lxiii. 15. Hos. xi. 8.) and will in due time pardon and receive him into favour. (Compare Isa. lviii. 18.)

Ver. 21. *Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps,* &c.] He bids them think of preparing for their return to their own country, and in order to that end, to set up way-marks to direct travellers in the right road. (See Isa. lvii. 14. lxii. 10.) The word *tamrurim, high heaps,* is used here in a different sense from that in which it is taken, ver. 15. and signifies such pillars or obelisks as used to be set up on the road-side, for the direction of travellers: in which sense Schindler understands it, Hos. xii. 14. and renders that place thus, *Israel provoked him to anger by his heaps;* that is, his altars, which stood as *heaps in the field,* as it is said there, ver. 11.

Turn again, O virgin of Israel.] See the note on ver. 14.

Ver. 22. *How long wilt thou go about?*] Or go out of the right way, or follow thine own imagination? (Compare ii. 18, 19. 26.)

O thou backsliding daughter.] Compare vii. 24. Thou that wast formerly backward in obeying God's laws, and now seemest to linger and loiter when God calls thee to return homeward out of a strange country. This expression is often used of Israel, or the ten tribes; (see iii. 6. 8. 11, 12.) and of Judah and Israel together, (ibid. ver. 14. 22.) both being comprehended under the title of *The virgin of Israel,* in the foregoing verse. In which sense it may most properly be understood here.

For the Lord hath created [or *doth create*] *a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.*] As it is a new thing, and unheard of, that a woman should court a man, so God will bring as strange a thing to pass, that the Jewish nation shall return to God their husband. (See iii. 14.) So most of the modern Jews, and some Christian expositors, understand the words; but several ancient Jews expounded the text of the Messias: (see Bishop Pearson on the third article of the Creed, Dr. Pocock's Miscellany Notes on Maimon. p. 345. and Dr. Jackson's Discourse upon the place.) and most Christian interpreters understand it of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary, without the operation of man. The Hebrew *Sabab* is used in a sense near akin to this, Deut. xxxii. 10. where it signifies carrying in the arms, and cherishing as a mother does a child: to the same sense it is said, *Thou shalt embrace a son,* 2 Kings iv. 16. *Habebis in utero,* as the Vulgar Latin renders it; though the word in the original is not the same as it is here. Taking the words in this sense, they properly import a *new creation,* and such as is the immediate work of God. That such a prophecy concerning the conception of Christ may not be thought to come in here abruptly, it is to be observed, that as the coming of the Messias is the foundation of all the promises, both of the first and second covenant; (see 2 Cor. i. 20.) so it contains the most powerful arguments to persuade men to obedience. And that covenant of which Christ was to be the Mediator, is plainly foretold and described at the thirty-first and following verses of this chapter. A learned friend thinks the phrase, *a woman shall compass a man,* to be a proverbial speech; as much as to say, A woman, *i. e.* the most feeble, despicable persons, compared elsewhere to women, (see Isa. iii. 12. xix. 6. xxvii. 11. Jer. l. 37. Nahum iii. 11.) even such a one shall turn back or discomfit a mighty warrior, as the word *geber* properly signifies. He supposes the expression to be equivalent to those promises, that *one should chase a thousand,* and the like; which promises should again be fulfilled at the general restoration of the Jewish nation: (see ver. 8. of this chapter, Joel iii. 10. Zech. xii. 8.) he farther supposes, that the word *woman* alludes to the virgin of Israel, ver. 21. called also a *backsliding daughter,* ver. 22. and compared to Rachel, ver. 15.

Ver. 23. *The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.*] The giving up of the city and temple into the hands of the heathen, was a profanation of the peculiar place of God's residence. (See Lam. ii. 7.) But when the captivity should be restored, and the temple rebuilt, Jerusalem shall enjoy its former privileges, and be called the seat of justice, because there the supreme courts of justice should be re-established; (compare Psal. cxxii. 5.) and the temple shall be styled the *holy mountain,* or place dedicated to God's service. (See the note on ver. 12. and compare Isa. i. 26. Zech. viii. 3.)

Ver. 24. *And there shall dwell in Judah and in all the cities thereof, husbandmen,* &c.] The country shall be reinhabited as well as the city. (See xxxiii. 12. Isa. lxv. 10.)

Ver. 25. *For I have satiated* [or *I will satiate*] *the weary soul,* &c.] I will comfort them after their sorrows and afflictions.

Ver. 26. *After this I awaked, and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me.*] The words of the prophet, when he reflected upon the vision which he had seen, which was so agreeable to him, that it gave him as great comfort and satisfaction as men feel when they have been refreshed with a sweet sleep and undisturbed rest.

Ver. 27. *Behold, the days come—that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.*] Under the captivity the land lay desolate *without man and beast,* (xxxiii. 12.) but now it shall be inhabited and replenished with both. Israel and Judah are here joined together, as in many places before. (See the notes on xxx. 2.)

Ver. 28. *And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck them up,* &c.] I will shew the same care and vigilance (see xliv. 27.) in restoring them, as I have formerly done in destroying them: according to the promise that I made to them upon their repentance and reformation. (See xviii. 7, 8. compare xxxii. 22.)

Ver. 29. *In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.*] God hath often declared, that he will *visit the sins of the fathers upon the children:* and particularly threatened to execute judgment upon the present generation, for the idolatries and other sins of their forefathers. (See xv. 4.) This gave occasion to the proverb mentioned in this verse, which they that were in captivity applied to their own case; as if the miseries they endured were chiefly owing to their fathers' sins. (See Lam. v. 7. Ezek. xviii. 2.) But when this judgment should be removed, then there would be no farther occasion to use this proverb, as Ezekiel speaks in the forementioned place.

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Ver. 30. *But every one shall die for his own iniquity*, &c.] These national judgments ceasing, every one should suffer only for his own faults. This promise will be remarkably verified, when God shall cease to visit upon the Jewish nation that imprecation which they laid upon themselves for the death of Christ: *His blood be upon us, and upon our children*, (Matt. xxvii. 25.)

Ver. 31. *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel*, &c.] This must be meant of the evangelical covenant, as the text is expounded by St. Paul, (Heb. viii. 8. x. 16.) The benefits of this covenant were first offered to the Jews, as being the completion of that covenant God made with their fathers. (See Acts iii. 26. xiii. 46.)

Ver. 32. *Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers*, &c.] The old covenant, as it is opposed to the new, signifies that system of laws and ordinances, which were the condition of that covenant made with the Jews upon Mount Sinai: and in this sense the word *law* is usually taken in the New Testament, when it is opposed to the gospel. (See Acts xv. 5. Rom. iii. 19. Gal. iii. 17.)

When I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.] God's care over his people in bringing them out from thence, and conducting them through the wilderness, is compared to a parent's leading a tender child. (See Deut. i. 31. Hos. xi. 3.)

Which covenant of mine they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord.] See the note on ii. 2. The LXX. render the latter part of the sentence, *And I regarded them not:* which interpretation St. Paul follows, Heb. viii. 9. and the learned Dr. Pocock, in his Miscellany Notes upon Porta Mosis, chap. 1. confirms this sense of the verb *baalti*, from the use of the word in Arabic.

Ver. 33. *I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their heart.*] This may be meant of God's renewing their minds by his grace, which is called *giving them a new heart, and a new spirit, that they may walk in his statutes.* (See Ezek. xi. 19. xxvi. 26, 27.) Or else the words denote the difference between this and the former covenant, *viz.* that it should require inward purity, instead of external obedience, and a reasonable service in the place of the ceremonial ordinances; which is one reason why the gospel is called, in the New Testament, *the law of the Spirit*, (Rom. viii. 2.) in opposition to the *law of a carnal commandment*, (Heb. vii. 16.)

And I will be their God, &c.] See the note on xxx. 22.

Ver. 34. *And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord.*] The laws of the new covenant shall be so plain and agreeable to the dictates of reason, that there shall be no need still to be putting men in mind of their duty, as was the case of the former covenant, where a great part of its ordinances were purely positive and ceremonial. And God will now give a greater measure of his grace, both to instruct men in the knowledge of his will, and engage them to practise accordingly, as the following words import.

For they shall all know me, &c.] *They shall be all taught of God*, as Isaiah speaks, lvi. 13. There shall be an extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit, both in the ordinary and extraordinary effects of it, at the time when the gospel is published. (See the notes upon that place of Isaiah, and compare Joel ii. 28. with John vii. 39.)

For I will forgive their iniquity, &c.] God will deal with them with that grace and favour, as if they had never offended him; (see Rom. iii. 25.) and will set forth Christ to be a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and propitiation, for the sins of all that truly repent and turn to him. (Compare xxxii. 18. and see Acts x. 43. xiii. 39. Rom. xi. 27.)

Ver. 35. *Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day*, &c.] See xxxiii. 20. Psal. lxxxix. 36, 37.

Ver. 36. *If these ordinances depart from before me—then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me.*] God will preserve a remnant of them where they are led captive, and restore them to their own country and government, as is foretold in several verses of this chapter. He will likewise preserve another remnant at the beginning of the gospel, called the Σωζόμενοι, Luke xiii. 23. Acts ii. 47. who, by embracing the faith of Christ, should escape those terrible judgments that should be inflicted upon the main body of that nation: and Providence doth still continue them in a distinct body from all other people in the world, in order to their conversion in God's due time. To this place St. Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews in the latter times, seems to refer, when he saith, *The gifts and calling of God* [to the Jews] *are without repentance*, (Rom. xi. 29.)

Ver. 37. *I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done.*] Though their sins have deserved that God should utterly reject them, yet, out of a regard to the promises made to their fathers, he will, in due time, receive them to mercy. (See Rom. xi. 25. 28.)

Ver. 38. *Behold, the days come—that the city shall be built to the Lord.*] The following prophecy might, in some sense, be fulfilled, in the rebuilding the city after the captivity: but I conceive the mystical sense of the words relate to a more perfect state of the church, which is elsewhere called *the city of God*, and the *New Jerusalem:* and whose dimensions are figuratively described, Ezek. xlviii. 30, &c. Rev. xxi. 10, &c.

From the tower of Hananeel, unto the gate of the corner.] The ancient limits of the city, from the south-east part to the south-west. (See Neh. iii. 1. Zech. xiv. 10. and Dr. Lightfoot's Description of Judea, chap. 26.)

Ver. 39. *And the measuring line shall go forth over against it.*] Or, *just before it; viz.* before the corner gate, going on to the west part of the city.

Upon the hill Gareb.] By which Dr. Lightfoot understands Mount Calvary, situate on the west side of Jerusalem.

Ver. 40. *And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and of the fields, unto the brook Kidron*, &c.] The valley of Tophet, which was made a common burying-place, (see vii. 32.) and the receptacle of the filth of the city, even this place shall be cleansed, and set apart as holy unto the Lord. This may be mystically understood of the holiness of the New Jerusalem, when the church shall be thoroughly purged from all corruption. (Compare Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Joel iii. 17. Isa. lii. 1. lx. 21. Rev. xxi. 27.)

It shall not be plucked up [see ver. 28.] *nor thrown down any more for ever.*] This probably denotes such a settled and unmoveable state of the church, as is not to be expected in this world. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 8. li. 16. lii. 1. lx. 15. lxii. 8.)

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CHAP. XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

Jeremiah being put in prison, for foretelling the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, doth there, by God's direction, purchase a field from his uncle's son, to foreshew that God will restore again the Jews to their country, where they shall enjoy their former possessions.

Ver. 1. *IN the tenth year of Zedekiah—which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.*] Compare lii. 12.

Ver. 2. *For the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem.*] The siege lasted from the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign to the fourth month of the eleventh year. (See xxxix. 1, 2.)

And Jeremiah was shut up in the court of the prison.] He was afterward put in the dungeon: (see xxxvii. 16. xxxviii. 6.) but now was not under so severe a restraint. (Compare ver. 26. 28. of that chapter.)

Ver. 3, 4. *For Zedekiah—had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say,* &c.] This refers to the prophecy set down xxxiv. 2, &c. The particulars there mentioned being in order of time, before the passages related in this chapter. Jeremiah's prophecies are put together without any regard to the order of time, as hath been observed at the beginning of this Commentary.

Ver. 5. *And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon; and there shall he be till I visit him.*] In his posterity, whom I will restore to their own country. So God tells Jacob, *I will go down with thee into Egypt, and will also surely bring thee up again,* (Gen. xlvi. 4.) which promise was made good only to his posterity. So God is said to *deal mercifully with our fathers,* for so the sense runs in the original, Ποιῆσαι ἔλεος μετὰ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, (Luke i. 72.) by performing his promises to their children. (See the note on xxix. 10. of this prophecy.)

Though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.] See xxi. 4. 9. xxxvii. 7. 10.

Ver. 8. *Buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin.*] Near Jerusalem; (see ver. 44.) and consequently at this time actually in the possession of the Chaldean army.

For the right of inheritance is thine, and the possession is thine.] As being next of kin, (see Lev. xxv. 25.) the fields in the suburbs of the Levites being unalienable (see ver. 34. of that chapter); this seems to have been a field that came into the family either by purchase, (see Deut. xviii. 8.) or by their marrying a wife of another tribe: for their rabbins agree, that the ordinance mentioned Numb. xxxvi. 7. which forbids the possession of lands *being removed from one tribe to another,* did only take place at their first settlement in the land of Canaan. (See Selden, de Synedriis, lib. iii. cap. 4. n. 1. et de successione in bona, cap. 18.)

[On the other side, several good reasons may be alleged to prove those ordinances perpetual. For this was the chief design of instituting the year of jubilee, *viz.* to restore the lands to their ancient owners. Out of regard to this law Naboth refused to alienate his field to Ahab, at the peril of his life: (1 Kings xxi. 3.) the same law is renewed Ezek. xlvi. 17. See Dr. Alix. Reflect. upon the books of Moses, par. ii. chap. 19.]

Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.] I knew that this offer was made to me by God's especial direction, thereby to give a sensible assurance that the nation should return from their captivity, and be restored to their ancient possessions. (See ver. 15. 44.)

Ver. 9. *And I weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.*] Which in our money is not much above forty shillings: a small price for a field or piece of ground. The reason of the lowness of the price might be, because it was only buying the reversion of the ground, the purchaser or his heirs not coming into possession till the seventy years of captivity were expired. And the purchase itself, like other prophetical signs, was rather a declaration of what should come to pass, than the conveyance of a present benefit: but our margin reads, *Seven shekels, and ten pieces of silver:* and the ten pieces may stand for a larger sum than a shekel, as the *seventy pieces* mentioned Judg. ix. 4. certainly do. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, *Seven minas, and ten shekels of silver:* each *mina,* according to Ezekiel's computation, (xlv. 12.) amounting to sixty common shekels, which is nine pounds sterling, according to Dr. Prideaux's computation; by which reckoning the whole sum amounts to above sixty-four pounds of our money.

Ver. 10. *And weighed him the money in the balances.*] In ancient times all money went by weight; (see Gen. xxiii. 16. Zech. xi. 12.) a custom still used in several countries.

Ver. 11. *So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed, according to the law and custom, and that which was open.*] The open or unsealed writing, was either a copy of the sealed deed, or else a certificate of the witnesses in whose presence the deed of purchase was signed and sealed.

Ver. 12. *In the sight of Hanameel my uncle's son.*] The word *son* is not in the Hebrew, but is to be understood by a usual ellipsis. (See Matt. x. 2, 3.) But the Hebrew word *dod,* signifies any relation or near kinsman; see Amos vi. 10. where the Septuagint very properly render it, Οἰκεῖος.

Ver. 14. *And put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.*] When hid under ground for greater security, to be produced when the land is reinhabited.

Ver. 17. *Ah, Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth,* &c.] This prayer begins with an acknowledgment of God's infinite power, which is made manifest, both in the works of creation and providence, whereby he shews himself wonderful in his mercies, and terrible in his judgments.

And there is nothing too hard for thee.] Or, *hidden from thee,* as the Hebrew word literally imports; *i. e.* out of the reach of thy wisdom to compass, or bring to pass. (See the same phrase, Gen. xviii. 14.)

Ver. 19. *Great in counsel, and mighty in works.*] Who art infinitely wise in ordering all events, and as powerful in putting thy decrees in execution.

Ver. 20. *Who hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day.*] The remembrance of which is preserved unto this day.

And amongst other men.] The word *other* is in like manner understood, 2 Chron. xxxii. 22. Isa. xxvi. 13.

And hast made thee a name.] Compare 1 Chron. xvii. Dan. ix. 15. where the margin reads, *Hast made thee a name,* as it is here in the text.

Ver. 23. *Therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them.*] Compare xi. 4. 8.

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Ver. 24. *Behold the mounts.*] The ramparts which are raised against the walls, for placing *engines of shot,* as the margin interprets the word *mesolleloth,* in order to the making a general assault, and taking the city. (Compare xxxiii. 4.)

Because of the sword, the famine, and the pestilence.] See ver. 36. xiv. 12.

Ver. 25. *And thou hast said unto me—Buy thee the field for money.*] In this posture of affairs, when the city and the country round about it is in the hands of the enemy, thou commandest me to make this purchase, which I have no prospect of ever enjoying.

For the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.] Or rather, *Although the city be given,* &c. (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 292.)

Ver. 27. *Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is any thing too hard for me?*] The difficulties which thou thinkest are not to be surmounted, are not so to me, who can do all things, and have the lives and actions of men wholly at my disposal. *All flesh* is the same with *all men.* (See Psal. lxv. 2. Isa. xl. 5.)

Ver. 29. *Upon whose roof they have burnt incense unto Baal.*] See the note on xix. 13.

Ver. 30. *For the children of Israel, and the children of Judah.*] The title of Israel and Judah is sometimes given to the Jews, after the captivity of the ten tribes; (see ver. 32. xxxvi. 2.) because there were still some remains of those tribes left, who joined themselves to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. (See 2 Chron. xxix. 24. xxx. 1. 11. 18. xxxiv. 33. Ezra vi. 17.)

Have only done evil before me from their youth.] See ii. 7. 25. vii. 23. 28. xxii. 21.)

Ver. 31. *From the time that they built it.*] Or, *that it was built,* the personal being often used for the impersonal. (See the note upon Isa. xliv. 18.) David was the builder of that part of Jerusalem that is called Zion, therefore styled the *city of David.* (See 2 Sam. v. 9.) He likewise enlarged the whole city of Jerusalem, making it the seat of the kingdom: for which reason Jerusalem is sometimes called the *city of David.* (See Isa. xxix. 1.) But we do not read that idolatry, the sin here spoken of, was committed there in David's time: so that the expression seems to be hyperbolical, like that of Isa. xlviii. 8. where God, speaking of the Jews' proneness to idolatry, saith, *Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb:* meaning from the very time of their living in Egypt. (Compare Ezek. xx. 8. xxiii. 3. 19. 27.) If we take the words in a stricter sense, they must be understood of the times of Solomon, who beautified the city with the temple, and other stately buildings, but afterward defiled it by idolatry. (See 1 Kings xi. 7. compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 13.)

That I should remove it from before my face.] I should withdraw my protection from it. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 27. xxiv. 3.)

Ver. 32. *Their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets.*] See ii. 8. 26.

Ver. 33. *And they have turned to me the back, and not the face.*] See ii. 27.

Though I taught them, rising up early, &c.] See vii. 13.

Ver. 34. *But they set their abominations in the house which is called by my name.*] See the note on vii. 30, 31.

Ver. 35. *And they built the high places of Baal—to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch.*] See the note on xix. 5.

To cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire.] The words *through the fire* are not in the Hebrew; but in other places which speak of the same thing, the words are expressed at full length. (See Deut. xviii. 10. 2 Kings xxiii. 10.) Elsewhere, the same thing is expressed by *burning their sons and their daughters in the fire,* and *offering them for burnt-offerings:* see vii. 31. xix. 5. of this prophecy, Deut. xii. 38. The idolatrous Jews are often upbraided with the practice of this inhuman rite. (See Psal. cvi. 37. Isa. lvii. 5.) And the phrase of *making children pass* through the fire, is certainly taken in this sense, Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. xxiii. 37. where it is explained by *slaying them, sacrificing them, and giving them to be devoured.*

But some critics are of opinion, that the exposition is taken in a milder sense in other texts, particularly 2 Kings xvi. 3. and denotes only holding children over the fire, or making them pass through the flame, by way of lustration or dedication to some idol. To confirm this interpretation, they observe, that the verb *henebir,* used in the text, signifies to *dedicate* or *consecrate.* (See Exod. xiii. 12.) See the reasons on which this interpretation is grounded, at large explained in Dr. Spencer, de Legib. Hebræor. lib. ii. cap. 10. sect. 2.

Which I commanded them not, &c.] See the note on vii. 31.

Ver. 36. *And now therefore thus saith the Lord.*] In this and the following verses, God gives an answer to the doubt proposed by the prophet, ver. 25. Or the words may be thus translated, *But now, notwithstanding* [all this], *thus saith the Lord.* So the particle *laken* is often taken. (See note on xvi. 14.)

Ver. 37. *Behold, I will gather them out of all countries,* &c.] See the notes on xxiii. 3. 8. xxix. 14.

And I will cause them to dwell safely.] Compare xxiii. 4. St. Jerome observes in his notes upon the place, that this promise, taken in its full extent, was not made good to those that returned from captivity, because they were frequently infested with wars, as well by the kings of Syria and Egypt, as by the rest of their neighbours, as appears from the history of the Maccabees, and were finally subdued and destroyed by the Romans.

Ver. 38. *And they shall be my people,* &c.] See xxx. 22.

Ver. 39. *And I will give them one heart, one way, that they fear me for ever.*] This must be understood, at least as to its ultimate completion, of the reunion of Judah and Israel after the general restoration. (See the note on iii. 18. xxx. 3.) When the ten tribes set up a distinct kingdom from that of Judah, they stood divided, not only in their civil interests, but also with respect to their religious worship. These distinctions, God saith, he will entirely abolish at the time of their conversion. (Compare xxiv. 7. Ezek. xi. 19.) The same blessing is more fully expressed in these words, (Ezek. xxxvii. 22.) *I will make them one nation, and one king shall be king over them.* At the same time we may expect the fulness of the gentiles to come in, and then *all nations shall serve the Lord with one consent,* (Zeph. iii. 9.) and *there shall be one Lord, and his name one,* (Zech. xiv. 9.)

Ver. 40. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*] The Jewish covenant, with respect to the ceremo-

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nial ordinances contained in it, is sometimes called an *everlasting* covenant; (see Gen. xvii. 13. Lev. xxiv. 8. Isa. xxiv. 5.) *Berith olam* in the Hebrew; because those ordinances were to continue for a long succession of time, called *olam* in that language, (see the note upon xxv. 9.) and to last till the new *olam*, or *age of the Messias*, called αἰὼν μέλλων, *the age*, or *world to come*, Heb. ii. 5. vi. 5. But when this expression is applied to the gospel-covenant, there is a peculiar emphasis contained in it, implying that it should never be abolished, or give way to any other dispensation. (See Jer. l. 5. Isa. lv. 3. compared with Psal. lxxxix. 34, 35.)

And I will put my fear into their hearts.] *They shall all know me*, xxxi. 34. and *shall be all taught of the Lord*, Isa. liv. 13. (See the notes upon those places.)

Ver. 41. *And I will rejoice over them to do them good.*] I will take pleasure in doing them good, according to my promise, Deut. xxx. 9. whereas before, the *Lord rejoiced over them to destroy them*, Deut. xxviii. 63. which God is never said to do, but when men have filled up the measure of their iniquities. (See the note upon Isa. i. 24.)

And I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.] With a true and lasting affection. (Compare xxiv. 6. xxxi. 28. Amos ix. 15.)

Ver. 42. *Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people*, &c.] Compare xxxi. 28.

Ver. 43. *And fields shall be bought in this land.*] So that it was not without good reason that I sent Hanameel unto thee, ver. 8.

Whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast, &c.] Words spoken by the Jews, by way of despair, as if they had no hopes that their land should ever be inhabited again.

Ver. 44. *In the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem*, &c.] See the notes on xvii. 26.

For I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.] The return of their captivity under Cyrus shall be an earnest of those greater blessings I will bestow upon them at their general restoration. (Compare ver. 37. 41. xxxiii. 7. 26.)

CHAP. XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

God renews his promises of restoring the Jewish nation, and repeats the same gracious assurances thereof, which he gives them in the two foregoing chapters; the completion of which is to be expected under the kingdom of the Messias: whose coming is plainly foretold at the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of this chapter.

Ver. 1. *WHILST he was yet shut up in the court of the prison.*] See xxxii. 2.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof.*] *i. e.* Of the city Jerusalem, a figure of that church, spoken of before. (See xxxii. 36. 44. compared with the fourth, sixth, and ninth verses of this chapter.)

Ver. 3. *Call unto me, and I will answer thee.*] An expression betokening God's favour and loving-kindness: that he is ready to comply with the first intimations of his servant's desires. (Compare xxix. 12. Psal. xci. 15. Isa. lxv. 24.) As, on the contrary, God's rejecting men is expressed by his refusing to answer when they call, (Prov. i. 24.) God's thus directing his discourse to Jeremiah, doth not only denote his kindness towards the prophet, but likewise implies the affection he still bore to his people, for whom the prophet did so earnestly intercede, and whose welfare he had so much at heart.

And shew thee great things which thou knowest not.] Not only what relates to the return of thy people from the Babylonish captivity, but likewise the blessings to be conferred upon them in the times of the Messias.

Ver. 4. *Which are thrown down by the mounts.*] By the battering engines placed upon the mounts, that are raised against the walls of the city. (See xxii. 24.)

And by the sword.] By the violence of war. But the Hebrew word is sometimes taken for such instruments as are used in demolishing any building. Accordingly, it is rendered a *mattock* by our translators, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6. See likewise Ezek. xxvi. 9. where it is translated *axes*.

Ver. 5. *They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies*, &c.] To fill them, *i. e.* the houses mentioned ver. 4. This verse comes in by way of parenthesis, between the fourth and sixth, to shew, that at present God will not prosper any efforts which are made for the defence of the city, though he will restore it hereafter to its former splendour. Lud. de Dieu renders the words thus, The *Chaldeans come to fight, and to fill*, &c. and he proves, by several instances, that the Hebrew particle *eth* sometimes goes before a nominative case: a plain instance of which syntax is to be seen, xxxvi. 22. (See likewise Noldius's Concordance, p. 121.)

Ver. 6. *Behold, I will bring it health and cure.*] I will restore this place to its former prosperity, and deliver it out of that calamitous state, into which the sins of the inhabitants have brought it. (Compare xxx. 12, 13. 17.)

Ver. 7. *And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return.*] See the note on xxx. 3.

And I will build them as at the first.] Compare xxiv. 6. xxxi. 4. 28. xlii. 10.

Ver. 8. *And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity*, &c.] I will not impute their sins any longer to them, but remit the punishments I have inflicted upon them for their iniquities. The word *cleanse* may be here taken in a legal sense for acquitting or *pronouncing clean*, as the word is translated, Lev. xiii. 28. In the same sense, the Greek verbs Ἁγιάζω and Καθαρίζω (which answer to the Hebrew *tahar* in the text) are used by St. Paul and St. John, for taking away the guilt of sin. (See Heb. ix. 13, 14. x. 14. 29. xiii. 12. 1 John i. 7. 9.) The whole verse implies that general promise of pardon of sins, which is elsewhere spoken of, as the peculiar blessing of the gospel. (Compare xxxi. 34. Ezek. xxxvi. 25.)

Ver. 9. *And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth.*] God's especial providence over the Jews, in restoring their city and temple, shall be taken notice of by the heathen world, and make them give glory to that God whom they worship. (See Ezra i. 2. vi. 12.) To the same sense God is said to make *Jerusalem a praise in the earth*, (Isa. lxii. 7.) *i. e.* the subject of men's praise and admiration, the glory of which redounds to God, who is her protector. This promise is more signally fulfilled in the Christian church, which the heathens resorted to, as the seat and temple of truth. (See Isa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 21. 23.)

And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness—

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that I do unto it.] These surprising effects of my goodness shall produce an astonishment like that which arises from fear. (Compare Psal. cxxxix. 14. Isa. lx. 5.)

Ver. 10. *Which ye say shall be desolate,* &c.] See the note on xxxii. 43.

Ver. 11. *The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness,* &c.] The contrary to which is threatened in the times of captivity and desolation. (See xvi. 9.)

The voice of them that shall say, Praise ye the Lord—for the Lord is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.] We read that those who returned from captivity used this very hymn, Ezra iii. 11.

And of them that bring the sacrifice of praise unto the house of the Lord.] Such as was offered upon any great deliverance. (See Lev. vii. 12. Psal. cvii. 22. cxvi. 17.) The word here used signifies praise and thanksgiving in general; and is used for those choirs or companies who made a solemn thanksgiving procession upon the dedication of the new wall at Jerusalem, (Nehem. xii. 31. 38. 40.) This is called by St. Paul the *sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips,* Heb. xiii. 15. to distinguish it from the oblations commanded by the law, which consisted of the fruits of the ground, or of the flock and herd. [Kimchi observes upon the place, that none but eucharistical sacrifices shall be in use in the times of the Messias.]

For I will cause their captivity to return, as at the first.] See xxx. 20, 21.

Ver. 12. *Again in this place—shall be a habitation for shepherds, causing their flocks to lie down.*] Compare l. 19. Isa. lxv. 10.

Ver. 13. *In the cities of the mountains,* &c.] See the note on xvii. 26.

Shall the flocks pass again under the hand of him that telleth them?] That is, of their shepherds, who number their cattle by striking every one with their rod, as it comes out of the fold. (See Lev. xxvii. 32.)

Ver. 14. *Behold, the day is come—that I will perform that good thing which I have promised.*] Or, *good word,* as it is in the original; (compare xxix. 10. Zech. i. 13.) *i. e.* those gracious promises which relate to the gospel-state, and are called *the good word of God,* Heb. vi. 5.

Ver. 15. *In those days—will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow unto David,* &c.] See the notes upon xxiii. 5, 6.

Ver. 16. *And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.*] The name which properly belongs to the Messias (see xxiii. 6.) shall be given to Jerusalem, that is, to the church; to betoken that it is in a peculiar manner dedicated to him, he having chosen it for the place of his residence; (compare Ezek. xlviii. 35.) and that all the righteousness of the faithful, both their justification and sanctification, is derived from him. This seems to be the genuine sense of the words, as may appear to any that will compare the original phrase here, *Yikkarè lah,* with Isa. lxii. 4. 12. where it is said of Zion, the person only being changed, *Thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah,* and *Sought out.* Nor is there any greater impropriety in giving the name of Jehovah to a city, than in calling an altar *Jehovah-nissi,* (Exod. xvii. 15.) and *Jehovah-shalom,* (Judg. vi. 24.) in token that the Lord was author of those mercies, of which the said altars were designed to be monument. So the servants of God are described in the Revelation, as having his name written upon their forehead, (Rev. iii. 12. xiv. 1.) But several interpreters, particularly Huetius, (Demonstr. Evang. prop. vii. cap. 16.) and our learned Bishop Pearson, in the notes upon his Exposition of the Creed, p. 165. render the words thus, *He that shall call her* [to be his peculiar people] *is the Lord our righteousness.*

Ver. 17. *David shall never want a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel.*] The promise of perpetuity made to David's kingdom shall be fulfilled in Christ, *whose kingdom shall have no end.* (See 2 Sam. vii. 16. Psal. lxxxix. 29. 36. Luke i. 32, 33.)

Ver. 18. *Neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man to stand before me, to offer burnt-offerings,* &c.] This, as it may be applied to the Christian church, imports that there shall never want a succession of men set apart to God's service, to perform the public offices of religion. As the prophets often describe the Christian worship, by representations taken from the temple-service, and speak of the one as succeeding the other; (see the notes on Isa. xix. 19. lvi. 7. lxvi. 23.) so the apostles prove the rights and privileges belonging to the ministers of the gospel, from the prerogatives given to the Jewish priesthood. (See Rom. xv. 16. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) The phrase *to stand before me,* is explained in the note upon xv. 1.

Ver. 20. *If you can break my covenant of the day, and—of the night,* &c.] Called the *ordinances* of the day and night, xxxi. 35, 36.

Ver. 21. *Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant—and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.*] The words contain a promise, that the kingdom and priesthood shall always continue in the church. For as Christ's *kingdom shall have no end,* so the saints that shall reign with Christ in glory shall be *priests unto God.* (Compare Isa. lxvi. 22. Rev. xx. 6.)

Ver. 22. *As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David,* &c.] This relates to the promise made to Abraham, of *multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore:* (Gen. xxii. 17.) which promise was fulfilled in his posterity, (Deut. x. 22. 1 Kings iv. 20.) And the text here affirms, that the same promise shall again be made good in aftertimes, and especially in the true Israelites, the spiritual seed of Abraham. (See Rom. iv. 16, 17.)

If we consider the literal sense of this promise, as it was fulfilled, when the Jews first peopled the land of Canaan; it is matter of wonder to reflect upon the vast numbers of inhabitants who dwelt in Judea, a country not above a hundred and sixty miles in length, and about a hundred and twenty in breadth, if we take in all the country on the other side of Jordan, to the borders of Arabia; and yet, in David's time, there were reckoned above fifteen hundred thousand fighting men, (1 Chron. xxi. 3.) And afterward, in Jehoshaphat's time, it appears from the muster-roll, that the soldiers in the kingdom of Judah only amounted to eleven hundred thousand. (See 2 Chron. xvii. 14, &c.)

Ver. 24. *The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off.*] By the *two families* are meant the tribes or families of Judah and Levi, mentioned ver. 22. (Compare Zech. xii. 12, 13.) The words are spoken by those who thought the Jews would never be restored to their former condition, or again enjoy their ancient government in church and state. [The expression may more probably

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denote the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. (See ver. 26. and compare Ezek. xxxvii. 16, &c.) The word *family* is equivalent to *kingdom:* (see the note upon i. 15.) so it is used, Micah ii. 3.]

Ver. 25, 26. *If I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth,* &c.] *i. e.* The vicissitude of day and night, and of summer and winter, upon which the seasons of the year, and fruitfulness of the earth, depend. (See xxxi. 36.)

Ver. 26. *For I will cause their captivity to return,* &c.] See xxxii. 44.

CHAP. XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

The king of Babylon and his army threatening to besiege Jerusalem (which gave occasion to the prophecy related at the beginning of the chapter); the Jews, being terrified under these apprehensions, entered into a solemn covenant of serving God, and obeying his laws: particularly that which enjoined them to let their servants go free after six years' service, (Exod. xxi. 2. Deut. xv. 12.) But the king of Egypt coming with an army to the relief of Zedekiah, and thereupon Nebuchadnezzar raising the siege of Jerusalem to march against him: (see ver. 21. and xxxvii. 5.) their present fears being over, the people repented of their reformation, and made their servants, whom they had set at liberty, return into bondage again, contrary to the law of God, and the covenant they themselves had lately agreed to. For which inhuman and unjust act, Jeremiah proclaims liberty to the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, to execute God's vengeance upon them.

Ver. 1. *WHEN Nebuchadnezzar—and all his army, and all the kingdoms of his dominions.*] See i. 15.

Fought against Jerusalem.] The siege was begun in the ninth year of Zedekiah, and the tenth month, and tenth day of the month, which answers to the latter end of our December. (See lii. 4.) A learned friend supposes, that what is here recorded, did not happen till some time after the siege was begun, and concludes from xxviii. 1. and the seventeenth verse of this chapter, that the sabbatical year was coincident with the last year of the siege, which was the eleventh year of Zedekiah. (See the notes upon those two places.)

And against all the cities thereof.] See ver. 7. The lesser cities of Judea, which were subject to Jerusalem as their metropolis, called elsewhere the *daughters of Judah,* by way of distinction from the mother-city. (Compare xlix. 2. li. 43.)

Ver. 2, 3. *Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon—and thou shalt not escape his hand,* &c.] This prophecy, which threatened the king in particular, as well as the city and nation in general, so much displeased Zedekiah, that he shut up Jeremiah in prison. (See xxxii. 2, 3.)

Ver. 5. *But thou shalt die in peace.*] By a natural death.

And with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings—so shall they burn odours for thee.] It was customary among the Jews, at the funeral of their kings, especially of those whose memory they honoured, to prepare a *bed of spices,* as it is called, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. which they made a perfume of by burning them, and therein to deposit the body of the deceased prince. (Compare the forementioned place with 2 Chron. xxi. 19.)

And they will lament over thee, saying, Ah lord!] In these and the foregoing words, God promises Zedekiah an honourable interment, and suitable to his quality: a favour he did not vouchsafe to Jehoiakim. (See xxii. 18.)

Ver. 7. *When the king of Babylon fought against Lachish, and against Azekah.*] Compare 2 Kings xviii. 13. xix. 8. Those two cities were not far from Jerusalem, and had been fortified by Rehoboam for the defence of his kingdom. (See 1 Chron. xi. 9.)

Ver. 8. *After that Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem.*] See the Argument of the chapter. Archbishop Usher supposes, that this covenant was entered into at the beginning of the year, which he computes to be a sabbatical year, upon the first news of the king of Babylon's intended invasion: whereas the Chaldean army did not actually besiege Jerusalem, till the latter end of the year, as hath been observed upon ver. 1. (See Annales V. T. ad A. M. 3414.)

To proclaim liberty unto them.] That they should grant liberty to all their servants, who had served them six years. The seventh is called *the year of release,* Deut. xv. 9. the same was also the sabbatical year, Lev. xxv. 4. This week or circle of years the Jews call *shemittah,* and seven times seven years, *i. e.* forty-nine years, make the jubilee, when a general liberty was proclaimed throughout the land. (Lev. xxv. 8. 10.)

Ver. 9. *That every man should let his man-servant—go free.*] See ver. 14.

Ver. 10. *Now, when all the princes—heard,* &c.] The verse may be thus translated, *And all the princes—consented that every one should let his man-servant—go free: they consented,* I say, *and let them go.* Concerning the *princes,* see the notes on xxvi. 10. xxxvi. 12. xxxviii. 4.

Ver. 11. *But afterward they turned—and brought them into subjection for servants, and for handmaids.*] Upon the king of Egypt's advancing with an army, and raising the siege of Jerusalem. (See ver. 21. and xxxvii. 5.)

Ver. 14. *At the end of every seven years.*] The seventh year was the year of release, (Deut. xv. 9.) consequently servants were to continue in service but six years, and at the beginning of the seventh were to be let go free. (See ibid. ver. 12.) For this reason some critics render the phrase here, *Within the term of seven years.* And the words mean no more, as appears by a like form of speech, Deut. xiv. 28. where it is said, *At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thy increase that year:* which is to be explained by what is said, xxvi. 12. where every third year is called *the year of tithing.* So Christ is said to rise again *after three days,* Mark viii. 31. which is elsewhere explained by his rising the *third day.*

But your fathers hearkened not unto me.] It appears from hence, and other passages of Scripture, that the sabbatical years were wholly neglected for several ages before the captivity. The author of the second book of Chronicles assigns this reason of the captivity, *That the land might enjoy her sabbaths,* (xxxvi. 21.) *i. e.* those years of rest of which it had been wrongfully deprived, by the neglect of the law of God in this particular. And if we reckon the

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whole seventy years' captivity as a punishment of this neglect, it will prove that the observation of those sabbatical years had been disused for four hundred and ninety years before. Wherefore, after the return from captivity, this was one branch of God's law, which Ezra and Nehemiah engaged the people to observe by a solemn vow and covenant, (Nehem. x. 31.)

Ver. 15. *And ye had made a covenant with me in the house that is called by my name.*] This was probably such a covenant, as Josiah and all the people had made formerly: (see 2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3.) whereby they obliged themselves to serve God, and obey his laws in general, and this concerning giving freedom to their servants in particular.

Ver. 17. *Ye have not hearkened to me, in proclaiming liberty,* &c.] Though you made proclamation of such a liberty, yet you have not performed it.

Behold, I proclaim a liberty to you for the sword, &c.] I will now make public proclamation, or declare that I give free commission and liberty for the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, to invade and make havoc among you. (See xxxii. 24. 26.) These judgments shall lay the land desolate, whereby it *shall enjoy its sabbaths,* which you would not suffer it to do, as long as you dwelt upon it. (See Lev. xxvi. 34, 35.) The expressions here used do farther import, that these calamities come upon men, by direction and commission from God, as the executioners of his justice. (Compare Ezek. xiv. 17.)

And I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.] See xxiv. 9.

Ver. 18—20. *When they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof.*] Implying, by that ceremony, that they wished themselves might be cut in sunder, in like manner, if they broke their solemn vow and promise. The same rite was used in ancient times, as appears from Gen. xv. 10. and conveyed down to after-ages, as may be seen in those forms recorded by Livy: "Tu Jupiter populum Rom. sic ferito, ut ego hunc agnum," lib. i. cap. 24. and lib. xxi. cap. 45. "Si falleret, Jovem cæterosque precatus Deos, ita se mactarent, quemadmodum ipse agnum mactasset." So the Greeks in Homer, when they had entered into a solemn league or agreement with the Trojans, to put an end to the war, by the single combat of Paris and Menelaus, at the pouring out the wine upon their sacrifice, make the like imprecation upon those who did not observe their part of the treaty, in that remarkable passage, Iliad. Γ'. ver. 298.

Ζεῦ κύδιστε, μέγιστε, καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι,
Ὁππότεροι πρότεροι ὑπὲρ ὅρκια πημήνειαν,
Ὧδέ σφ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέοι, ὡς ὅδε οἶνος.

The sense of which a late English translation thus expresses,

Almighty Jove, and all ye other powers,
Whoever first shall dare to break this treaty,
May their warm blood be poured upon the earth,
As is this wine.——

Ver. 19. *The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem.*] See xxix. 2.

The eunuchs.] The officers belonging to the court. (See xxix. 2. xxxviii. 7. 2 Kings xxiv. 12.)

Ver. 22. *Behold, I will command—and cause them to return to this city.*] See the notes on xxxvii. 5. 8.

CHAP. XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

By the obedience of the Rechabites to their fathers' commands, the Jews' disobedience to God's commands is condemned.

Ver. 1. *THE word which came to Jeremiah—in the days of Jehoiakim.*] This may most probably be referred to the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, when Nebuchadnezzar, having beaten the king of Egypt's army at Euphrates, (see xlvi. 2.) marched towards Syria and Palestine, to recover those provinces again which the king of Egypt had conquered: (see 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34. compared with xxiv. 7.) in which expedition he laid siege to Jerusalem. (See Dan. i. 1. and ver. 11. of this chapter.)

Ver. 2. *Go unto the house of the Rechabites.*] The Rechabites were descended from the Kenites: (1 Chron. ii. 55.) they never were incorporated with the Jewish nation; (see below, ver. 7.) but yet were looked upon as their friends and allies: (see 1 Sam. xv. 6.) and a respect was paid to them for the sake of Hobab, Moses's father-in-law, who was of that nation. (Judg. iv. 11.) They were worshippers of the true God, though they were not circumcised. (See the following verse, and 2 Kings x. 15, 16.)

And bring them into the house of the Lord.] Into one of the chambers which join to the temple. (See ver. 4.) By this it appears that the Rechabites were not idolaters, for it was not lawful for such persons to come within the precincts of the temple.

Ver. 4. *I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of Hanan,* &c.] There were several chambers adjoining to the temple, for the use of the priests and Levites, during the time of their ministration; and as repositories for laying up the holy vestments and vessels, and whatever stores were necessary for the daily sacrifices, and the other parts of the temple-service. (Compare xxxvi. 10. 1 Kings vi. 5. 1 Chron. ix. 27. 30.)

Which was by the chamber of the princes.] Where the Sanhedrin, or great council, used to assemble. (See xxvi. 10.) The Sanhedrin always sat in some great room adjoining to the temple. (See Dr. Lightfoot's Description of the Temple, chap. 9. 22.)

Above the chamber of Maaseiah—keeper of the door.] *i. e.* One of the keepers: for there were several Levites appointed for that office, both to open and shut the gates of the temple in due time, and likewise to attend at them all day, for preventing any thing that might happen to the prejudice of the purity or safety of that holy place. (See 1 Chron. ix. 18, 19. xxvi. 12, 13; &c. 2 Chron. viii. 14. 2 Kings xii. 9. xxv. 18.) Some of these officers had likewise the custody of the holy vessels. (See lii. 24. 1 Chron. ix. 26.)

Ver. 6. *For Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine,* &c.] Jonadab was a considerable man of this family: (see 2 Kings x. 15.) and his design was to reduce his family to the primitive manner of life, which was that of shepherds, living in tents, having no certain habitation, and taking care only

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for a supply of what was barely necessary to support nature. These rules he might probably give them, to put them in mind that they were strangers in Judea, and had no original right of inheritance there. (See the following verse.) Such voluntary austerities, in aftertimes, came into great repute among several sects of the Jews, particularly the pharisees and Essenes. (See Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 7.)

Ver. 8. *Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father.*] We have conformed ourselves to his injunctions, and governed our lives by them, during the space of near three hundred years.

Ver. 11. *But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar came into the land.*] If the words be understood of his coming with an army in person, then they must refer to his invading Judea, in the fourth year of his reign. (See the notes on ver. 1.)

For fear of the army of the Syrians.] Berosus mentions Nebuchadnezzar's conquest over Syria and Phœnice, as he is quoted by Josephus, (lib. i. contra Appion. p. 1045. B.) Out of these conquests he probably recruited his army.

Ver. 13. *So we dwell at Jerusalem.*] Upon the Chaldean invasion we retired to Jerusalem, where, during the siege of the place, we are forced to continue. In such a case, they did not think themselves obliged to a strict observance of the injunctions of Jonadab; because all human laws admit of an equitable construction, and may be superseded in cases of necessity; or when the observance of them is attended with such great inconveniences, as the law-maker himself, if he could have foreseen, would probably have excepted.

Ver. 14. *Rising early, and speaking.*] See vii. 13.

Ver. 15. *I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets,* &c.] See xxv. 4.

Ver. 19. *Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me.*] When the main body of the Jewish nation are dispersed in their several captivities, some of that family shall remain to attend upon my service, and enjoy the privileges of worshipping in my temple at Jerusalem. (Compare vii. 10.) Some branches of this family returned from the captivity, as appears from 1 Chron. ii. 55. Benjamin Tudelensis, who lived in the twelfth century, pretends, in his Itinerary, that he found a city inhabited by the Rechabites: but he is too fabulous a writer to be relied upon.

For ever.] This expression is not always to be taken in a strict sense, but often means only a long continuance, and is used comparatively with respect to a shorter duration. (See the notes on xxv. 9. xxxii. 40.)

CHAP. XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet, by God's command, orders his amanuensis, Baruch, to write all the prophecies which he denounced against Israel and Judah, in one volume: which Baruch first read to the people on two solemn fast-days, and afterward to the chief ministers of the state. They inform the king of the matter, who orders Jehudi to read it before him; but before he had read far, out of indignation, commands it to be cut in pieces, and burnt. Whereupon, God directs Jeremiah to indite it over again.

Ver. 1. *IN the fourth year of Jehoiakim.*] See xxv. 1.

Ver. 2. *Take thee a roll of a book.*] Compare Isa. viii. 1. Ezek. ii. 9. Zech. v. 1. The ancient manner of writing was upon long scrolls of parchment, which they afterward rolled upon sticks.

And write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah.] Jeremiah prophesied against Israel, as well as against Judah. (See ii. 4. iii. 12. 14, &c. ix. 26. xxiii. 13. xxxii. 30. 32.) The kingdom of Israel was indeed destroyed by Shalmaneser before the time of Jeremiah; but yet the prophet was ordered to reprove their sins, both to make the justice of God appear in punishing them so severely, and withal to warn the rest of the Jews by their example. Besides, there were some remains of these tribes still left, who joined themselves to the tribe of Judah. (See the note on xxxii. 30.)

And against all the nations.] See xxv. 15, 16, &c.

From the days of Josiah.] From the thirteenth year of his reign. (See i. 2. xxv. 3.)

Ver. 3. *It may be the house of Judah will hear,* &c.] See the like expression, ver. 7. xxvi. 3. Ezek. xii. 3. Amos v. 15. Zeph. ii. 3. In which places God is introduced, as speaking after the manner of men, and using such methods, as in human probability may be most likely to prevail. (Compare viii. 6.) These and such-like expressions do likewise import, that God's foreknowledge of future events doth not put any force upon men's will, nor take away the liberty of human actions, as Origen hath acutely observed, in his Philocalia, cap. 23.

Ver. 5. *I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord.*] He was under confinement, probably for having given offence to the king, or the great men, by his prophecies. A calamity which often befel him. (See xx. 2. xxxii. 2. xxxvii. 15. xxxviii. 6.)

Ver. 6. *Go thou and read—the words of the Lord in the ears of the people,* &c.] The prophets usually published their sermons in the audience of the people: (see vii. 2. xi. 6. xvii. 20.) which were afterward delivered in writing for common use: as the law itself was written for that purpose, as God tells the Israelites by his prophet Hosea, viii. 12.

Upon the fasting-day.] The great day of expiation, which was kept upon the tenth day of the seventh month, (Lev. xxiii. 27. 29.) called by way of eminence the *fast,* Acts xxvii. 9.

And also shall read them in the ears of all Judah, that come out of their cities.] Who came to the feast of tabernacles, which followed five days afterward, (Lev. xxiii. 34.)

Ver. 7. *It may be they will present their supplication,* &c.] See ver. 3.

Ver. 9. *In the fifth year of Jehoiakim, in the ninth month, they proclaimed a fast.*] It was customary among the Jews to proclaim anniversary fasts upon certain days, in memory of some great calamities which had befallen them at that time. Of this kind were the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months, mentioned Zech. vii. 5. viii. 19. The first instituted in remembrance of the city's being taken by Nebuchadnezzar: the second in memory of the temple's being burnt in that month: the third for the murder of Gedaliah: the fourth in memory of the siege

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then begun. The fast mentioned in the text, was occasioned by the taking of the city by Nebuchadnezzar at that time, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, as Archbishop Usher conjectures, ad A. M. 3398, 3399. (See the note on xxxv. 1.)

Ver. 10. *Then read Baruch, in the book, the words of Jeremiah.*] This was the second time of Baruch's reading this book, almost a year after the first reading of it, (ver. 6.)

In the house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah the scribe.] Compare xxxv. 4. That chamber opened into the higher court, so that Baruch might read there in the audience of all the people, (ver. 13.) The scribe is the same with the secretary of state. (See 2 Kings xviii. 37.) Some understand the scribe to be the same that is called the *principal scribe of the host*, lii. 25. or, in the modern language, the *secretary of war*.

In the higher courts.] There were two courts before the temple: (see 2 Kings xxi. 5.) the higher court was that of the priests; between which and the court of the Israelites there was only a partition: but this whole platform was parted from the court of the *women*, by a wall, and an ascent of fifteen steps. From whence some derive the title of a *Song of Degrees*, which is given to the hundred and twentieth Psalm, and those that follow to the hundred and thirty-second. (See Dr. Lightfoot's Description of the Temple, chap. 20.)

At the entry of the new gate.] See xxvi. 10.

Ver. 11. *When Micah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book,* &c.] Shaphan's family were all great men at court. (See the note on xxvi. 24.)

Ver. 12. *And, lo, all the princes sat there.*] The chief officers of state, who were probably members also of the great Sanhedrin. (See xxvi. 10. xxxviii. 4.)

Ver. 16. *Now it came to pass, when they heard all these words, they were afraid.*] The judgments denounced were so terrible, as to make the *ears of them that heard them to tingle*. (See xix. 3.)

Ver. 19. *Then said the princes to Baruch, Go hide thee, thou and Jeremiah.*] They thought it their duty to acquaint the king with the matter, (ver. 16.) but yet were unwilling that Jeremiah and Baruch should feel the effects of his displeasure. [Jeremiah was a prisoner when he commanded Baruch to read this roll to the people; (ver. 5.) but what is here said relates to the year following. Compare ver. 1. with ver. 9.]

Ver. 22. *Now the king sat in the winter-house.*] The great men had distinct houses or apartments, fitted for the several seasons of the year. (See Amos iii. 15.)

In the ninth month.] Which answers partly to our November, partly to December.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves.*] Their books were made in form of a roll, (see ver. 2.) and therefore were not divided into leaves or pages, as ours are: so that by leaves we are to understand the columns, or several partitions, into which the breadth of the parchment was divided. This sense the Septuagint have expressed by the word σελίδες, which is used for the columns in Origen's edition of the Hexapla, by Epiphanius, lib. de Ponderib. et Mensuris, cap. 19.

Ver. 24. *Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments.*] A custom observed among the Jews at the hearing any dreadful news. (See 2 Sam. i. 11. 2 Kings xxii. 11.) The fear they were seized with at their first hearing these threatenings (ver. 16.) quickly wore off, or else they durst not discover it in the king's presence, who did not shew any concern himself.

Ver. 26. *But the Lord hid them.*] By the direction of Providence, they were concealed in such a place where they were not discovered.

Ver. 29. *And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim.*] Or, *of* Jehoiakim, so the same expression is translated, ver. 30. For this command seems to have been given to Jeremiah during the time of his concealment.

Saying, Why hast thou written therein.] This probably was part of the message which was to have been delivered to Jeremiah by the king's command, if he could have been found.

Ver. 30. *He shall have none to sit on his throne.*] *None of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David,* as God threatens his son Jehoiachin, (xxii. 30.) who reigned but three months, and left none to succeed him in a direct line. (See the note upon that place.)

And his dead body shall be cast out, &c.] See the note on xxii. 19.

Ver. 32. *And there were added besides unto them many like words.*] From hence we may infer, that God's Spirit did not always indite the very form of words which the holy writers have set down, but directing them in general to express his sense in proper words, left the manner of expression to themselves. From whence proceeds that variety of style which we may observe in the Scriptures, suitable to the different genius and education of the writers.

CHAP. XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

The king of Egypt coming with an army to the relief of Zedekiah, obliged Nebuchadnezzar to raise the siege of Jerusalem. Upon which, Zedekiah and his people conceived hopes of a deliverance from the Chaldeans. But the prophet foretelling that they would certainly return, and take the city, he is accused of siding with the enemy, and put in prison: but afterward released by Zedekiah.

Ver. 1. *ZEDEKIAH—whom Nebuchadnezzar made king in the land of Judah.*] Made him a tributary king, he having taken an oath of homage to the king of Babylon. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Ezek. xvii. 13.)

Ver. 3. *The king sent—Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest.*] See xxi. 1.

Ver. 4. *For they had not put him in prison.*] As they did afterward. (See ver. 15. and xxxii. 2.)

Ver. 5. *Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt,* &c.] Zedekiah, contrary to the oath that he had given to Nebuchadnezzar, made an alliance with the king of Egypt, and contracted with him for assistance against the king of Babylon: whereupon the king of Egypt sent an army to his relief: (see Ezek. xvii. 15.) which obliged the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem, that they might go and fight this army.

Ver. 7. *Pharaoh's army, that is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their land.*] They shall be discomfited by the Chaldeans, and forced to retreat without

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giving any assistance to Zedekiah. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 7. Ezek. xvii. 17.)

Ver. 8. *And the Chaldeans shall come again.*] See xxxiv. 22.

Ver. 10. *For though he had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans,* &c.] God himself will fight against you, so that there will be no need of any opposition from your enemies. (Compare xxi. 4, 5.)

Ver. 12. *Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem into the land of Benjamin.*] To Anathoth. (See i. 1.)

To separate himself thence in the midst of his people.] Or rather, *from the midst of his people,* or, *from among his people:* for the preposition *min* is to be taken as belonging in common to the latter part of the sentence. And so the French translation, published for the use of the reformed churches, understands it to this sense, that Jeremiah purposed to leave the city, and retire into his own country.

Ver. 13. *And when he was in the gate of Benjamin.*] The gate that leads towards the country of Benjamin.

Irijah—the son of Hananiah.] Probably of that Hananiah whose death Jeremiah foretold, xxvii. 17. So this nephew of his thought to revenge his grandfather's quarrel.

Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans.] Compare xxxviii. 4. The ground of this accusation was, because the prophet had foretold that they should take the city, and had exhorted the Jews to submit to them. (See ver. 10. of this chapter, xxvii. 6, &c. xxviii. 14. xxxiv. 2, 3.)

Ver. 14. *Then said Jeremiah, It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans.*] His foretelling the calamity that should come upon the nation, by the means of the Chaldeans, did not prove him to take their part, because at the same time he gave advice both to king and people, how they, in some measure, might escape the judgments he had denounced against them: (xxii. 2, 3. xxxviii. 17. xviii. 11. xxxvi. 3. and the note upon iv. 28.)

So Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes.] To the chief officers of state. (See xxxvi. 12.)

Ver. 16. *When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon.*] See xxxviii. 6.

And Jeremiah had remained there many days.] Till the Chaldean army had renewed the siege. (See ver. 19.)

Ver. 19. *Where are now your prophets,* &c.] *i. e.* Your false prophets. (Compare xxvi. 7. xxix. 1.) The event hath now convinced you how much they have deceived you: for you see the siege renewed, and the city in imminent danger of being taken.

Ver. 21. *Then Zedekiah commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison.*] A more favourable restraint. (See xxxii. 2.)

Till all the bread of the city was spent.] Till the famine forced the city to surrender. (See lii. 6.) This was the king's first order, but afterward it was reversed, by the importunity of the princes and great men, (xxxviii. 6.) when Jeremiah was again thrown into the dungeon: though after that he was released from that place, and returned to his former confinement, (ibid. ver. 28.)

CHAP. XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Upon the princes' informing the king against Jeremiah, he is again thrown into the dungeon: but afterward released, upon Ebed-melech's supplication to the king, whom he advises to submit to the Chaldeans.

Ver. 1. *JUCAL the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Melkiah,* &c.] Some of those who were sent by Zedekiah to Jeremiah, to inquire of the Lord concerning the event of the siege. (See xxxvii. 3. xxi. 1. 9.) The answer which Jeremiah returned by them to the king, he afterward published to all the people, which was the occasion of the new troubles he fell into, recorded in this chapter.

Ver. 4. *Therefore the princes said unto the king.*] See xxxvi. 12. 21.

For thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war.] By making them despair of success.

Ver. 5. *Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you*] The king speaks as one who in such difficult times durst not contradict the great men about him: or else his answer implies, that it was properly the business of the Sanhedrin to take cognizance of the prophets. (See Luke xiii. 33. and Selden, de Synedriis, lib. iii. cap. 9. n. 1.)

Ver. 6. *Then they took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Melchiah, that was in the court of the prison.*] Near the place where he was before, under a more gentle restraint. (See xxxii. 2. xxxvii. 21.)

So Jeremiah sunk in the mire.] Some think that when he was in this dismal place, he made those mournful meditations which are set down in the third chapter of the Lamentations. (See the fifty-third and fifty-fifth verses of that chapter.)

Ver. 7. *Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian.*] Huetius, in his treatise De Navigatione Solomonis, cap. 7. n. 7. observes out of Josephus, that Solomon, in his voyage to Tarshish, mentioned 1 Kings x. 22. amongst other merchandise, brought slaves from Ethiopia; which was likewise the practice of the Greeks and Romans in after-times, as he there proves by several testimonies: such a slave he supposes this Ebed-melech to have been, called here an eunuch, or officer of the king's house. (Compare xxix. 2. xxxiv. 19.) In the Hebrew he is called the *Chusite,* which may likewise signify the Arabian. (See the note on xiii. 23.)

The king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin.] Princes and magistrates usually heard causes in the gates of the city. (See Deut. xxi. 19. xxii. 15. Ruth iv. 1. 11. Psal. lxix. 12. Amos v. 10. 12. 15.) Concerning the gate of Benjamin, see xxxvii. 13.

Ver. 9. *My lord the king, these men have done evil,* &c.] This person, though only a proselyte, had a greater regard for God's word, and the messenger that published it, than any of the great men of his own nation. (See xxxix. 18.)

[*Whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is.*] They needed not to have put him into the dungeon, he would have died of hunger, without adding the cruelty of that punishment.]

For there is no more bread in the city.] See xxxvii. 21. lii. 6.

Ver. 14. *Then Zedekiah—sent, and took Jeremiah unto him into the third entry, that is in* [or *by*] *the house of the Lord.*] Dr. Lightfoot explains this of the third passage or gate which lay between the king's palace, where the prison

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was, and the temple, whither the king now retreated for fear of the Chaldean army. (See his Description of the Temple, chap. 33.)

Ver. 15. *Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death?*] The prophet had so much experience of the unsteadiness of the king's temper, of his backwardness in following good counsel, and want of courage to stand by those that durst adviso him well, that he might with good reason resolve not to venture his life to serve a man that was in a manner incapable of being directed. And although God had shewed him what would be the effect of his advice, if it were followed, (ver. 17.) yet it doth not appear that he had commanded him to make this known to Zedekiah.

And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?] The latter part of the sentence may be translated without an interrogation, *thou wilt not hearken unto me.* So the prophet might well conclude from his former behaviour. (See xxxvii. 2.) If we follow our English translation, the sense is the same as if the words were rendered, *Wilt thou hearken unto me?* Noldius observes, in his Concordance, p. 256. that the negative interrogation *halo,* is sometimes equivalent to an affirmative: of which he gives this example, (1 Kings i. 11.) "Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba, saying—Hast thou not heard that Adonijah doth reign?" Where the sense is the same as if he had said, *Hast thou heard?* See a like instance, Zech. iv. 13. This observation will help to explain that difficult place in Job, (iv. 6.) "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?" So interpreters generally render the words: but the sense would be much plainer, if we translate them, *Is this thy fear?* &c. *i. e.* Are thy great pretences to piety, and thy assurance of God's favour, of so little force, that they cannot afford thee any support in thy troubles? To this sense the Vulgar Latin translates the verse, *Ubi est timor tuus, fortitudo tua,* &c.

Ver. 16. *As the Lord liveth, who made us this soul.*] *i. e.* The Author of our life and being, and may he preserve it or take it away as I speak truth or falsehood. For such-like oaths had always some good or ill wish understood to go along with them; like that form of asseveration, 2 Kings ii. 2. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth;" or, As I wish thy soul may live: for so the expression may be translated.

Ver. 17. *If thou wilt assuredly go forth to the king of Babylon's princes.*] Those mentioned xxxix. 3. and submit thyself to them.

[*Then shall thy soul live, and this city shall not be burnt with fire.*] It has been before observed, that the judgments denounced against Jerusalem were not irreversible. See the note upon iv. 28. xvii. 25.]

Ver. 18. *And thou shalt not escape out of their hand.*] See xxxix. 5.

Ver. 19. *And they mock me.*] When I am in the power of the Chaldeans, I fear that they will treat me with scorn and contempt, without any regard to my royal character. This he said as conscious to himself, that he had broken that oath of homage and fidelity he had before given to the king of Babylon, so that he might justly be treated as a man of no faith or honour. (See the note on xxxvii. 5.)

Ver. 20. *But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord.*] God foresees all possible events, and what will be the different success of the several counsels men propose to themselves.

Ver. 21. *This is the word that the Lord hath shewed me.*] Namely, that both the king and city shall be delivered into the hand of the Chaldeans. (See ver. 18.)

Ver. 22. *All the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes.*] The king's wives, his daughters, and the other women that belong to the king's court and family, shall become a prey to the chief officers of the king of Babylon's army. (See xli. 10. xliii. 6.)

And those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee; thy feet are sunk in the mire.] These very women shall then reproach thee for having suffered thyself to be ensnared by the ill advice of thy friends, and brought under insuperable difficulties.

And they are turned away back.] Even thy friends, who advised thee not to submit to the Chaldeans, will forsake thee in thy distress, and take the first opportunity of going over to them.

Ver. 24. *Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.*] Keep what hath passed between us secret, and I will keep my promise to thee of preserving thy life. (See ver. 16.)

Ver. 26. *I presented my supplication to the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there.*] Jeremiah had been formerly kept prisoner there, (xxxvii. 15.) But the last time he was imprisoned, was in the dungeon of Hammelech (ver. 6. of this chapter); a place which at this time might, perhaps, be put to some other use.

Ver. 27. *And he told them according to all the words that the king had commanded.*] He told them part of the truth, but not all, concealing from them the advice he had given the king, with relation to the questions he had proposed to him.

Ver. 28. *So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison.*] See xxxix. 21.

CHAP. XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains an account of the taking and burning Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, who also took Zedekiah, and carried him to Babylon: but had particular orders from their king to use Jeremiah well, who a little before had, by God's direction, made a promise to Ebed-melech of the Divine favour and protection, as a reward of the kindness he had shewed to the prophet.

Ver. 1. *IN the ninth year of Zedekiah,* &c.] See lii. 4. 2 Kings xxv. 1, 2.

Ver. 2. *The city was broken up.*] Such breaches were made in the walls, that the army of the Chaldeans, with their commanders, entered, and took possession of the city. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 3. *Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came, and sat in the middle gate.*] The gate between the wall that encompassed the city, and that which enclosed the temple.

Even Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo.] It was customary among the Chaldeans to give the names of their idols, as an

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additional title, or mark of honour, to persons of distinction. (See the note on Isa. xxxix. 1.) Nergal was the name of an idol among the Cuthites, (2 Kings xvii. 30.) Nebo was a considerable deity among the Chaldeans. (Isa. xlvi. 1.)

[Ver. 4. *When Zedekiah saw them, and all the men of war.*] When the king, and the armed men that were with him, saw that the Chaldeans were entered into the city, and had made themselves masters of it; instead of submitting himself to them as Jeremiah advised him, (xxxviii. 17, 18.) he endeavoured to make his escape.]

They fled—by the gate betwixt the two walls.] Betwixt the wall and the outworks: or betwixt the old wall of the city, and that new one which Hezekiah built. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.)

Ver. 5. *But the Chaldeans—overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho.*] Compare Josh. v. 10. This is called the *way of the plain*, or *wilderness*, Josh. viii. 15. and the *plain of the wilderness*, 2 Sam. xv. 28. xvii. 16. and elsewhere the *wilderness of Judea*. (See Matt. iii. 1.)

To Riblah, in the land of Hamath.] See the note on xlix. 23. Most interpreters suppose this city to be the same which was called Antioch, in aftertimes, when it was reedified by Seleucus. In this sense the Jerusalem Targum, upon Numb. xxxiv. 11. understands the word.

Where he gave judgment upon him.] Pronounced sentence upon him, as one who had broke his oath of fidelity to the king of Babylon, which he took when he made him king of Judea. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. 13. 2 Kings xxiv. 20. Ezek. xvii. 15. 18.)

Ver. 7. *He put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.*] See lii. 11. where the text adds, that he *put him in prison till the day of his death.* And thus were fulfilled two prophecies that seemed at first hearing to contradict one another; the first that of Jeremiah, that *Zedekiah's eyes should behold the eyes of the king of Babylon*, Jer. xxxii. 4. and the other that of Ezekiel, that *he should not see Babylon, though he should die there*, Ezek. xii. 14.

Ver. 9. *Then Nebuzar-adan—carried away captive—the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away.*] Compare 2 Kings xxv. 11. He carried away the fugitives, or deserters, that fell away to the Chaldeans during the siege, as well as those whom he took that were shut up in the city.

Ver. 11, 12. *Now Nebuchadnezzar gave charge concerning Jeremiah*, &c.] He was informed that the prophet had exhorted both king and people to submit themselves to his authority; (see xxviii. 11. xxxviii. 17, 18.) whose advice, if it had been hearkened to, would have prevented the charge and labour of so long a siege, and the bloodshed which attended it.

Ver. 14. *Even they sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison.*] Where he was when the city was taken, (xxxviii. 28.)

And committed him to Gedaliah.] After he had first been carried out of Jerusalem, with the rest of the captives, as far as Ramah. (See xl. 1. 5.)

Ver. 15. *While he was shut up in the court of the prison.*] Before the taking of the city. (See the foregoing verse.)

Ver. 18. *But thy life shall be for a prey unto thee.*] See the note on xxi. 9.

Because thou hast put thy trust in me.] See the note on xxxviii. 9.

CHAP. XL.

ARGUMENT.

Jeremiah is directed by Nebuzar-adan to repair to Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the land, and to whom the dispersed Jews from all parts repair. Johanan informs the governor of Ishmael's conspiracy, but is not believed.

Ver. 1. *THE word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord.*] This relates to the prophecy set down xlii. 7. which was occasioned by the story that here follows, concerning Ishmael's conspiracy against Gedaliah.

After that Nebuzar-adan—had let him go from Ramah, &c.] He was taken out of the court of the prison, (see xxxix. 14.) and carried with the other captives as far as Ramah, a town not far from Jerusalem. (See Judg. xix. 10. 13.)

[Ver. 5. *Now, while he was not yet gone back, he said.*] The words in the Hebrew are very perplexed, and by the different translations of the ancient interpreters, one might guess that some Hebrew copies had a different reading from the present. The Vulgar Latin reads, *And come not along with me;* as if he read, in the Hebrew, *imance* for *odenu*. Some of the ancient Greek copies read, *Before I go away, go back thou to Gedaliah.* The Chaldee seems to interpret it to the plainest sense, *If thou wilt not abide* [here], *go back to Gedaliah:* understanding the verb, *yashûb*, as if it were derived from *yashab*, to *abide*. Words of a like sound having often a promiscuous signification. See the note on xxiii. 39.]

Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.] This Gedaliah was a person of a considerable family, for interest and authority. (See the note on xxvi. 24.)

So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go.] This kind usage was shewed to the prophet, by the particular order of Nebuchadnezzar. (See xxxix. 11, 12.)

Ver. 6. *Then went Jeremiah to Gedaliah—to Mizpah.*] A town in the confines of Judah and Benjamin, (see Josh. xv. 38. xviii. 26.) where Gedaliah kept his residence, being a place of note in the times of the judges, (see Judg. xx. 1. 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6.) and afterward rebuilt by king Asa, (1 Kings xv. 22.)

Ver. 7. *Now, when all the captains of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men heard*, &c.] By the taking of Jerusalem, the Chaldeans made a complete conquest of Judea: whereupon the Jewish army with its commanders fled, (see xxxix. 4.) and dispersed themselves into several parts of the country: but upon the news of Gedaliah's being appointed governor of the land, they repaired all to him.

Ver. 8. *The Netophathite.*] Of Netophah, a town mentioned Ezra ii. 22.

Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite.] Descended from Maachah, Caleb's concubine, (1 Chron. ii. 48.) The same person is called Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, xlii. 1.

Ver. 9. *Fear not to serve the Chaldeans.*] The same advice Jeremiah had formerly given the Jews. (See xxvii. 11. xxix. 7.)

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Ver. 10. *As for me, behold, I dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans which will come unto us.*] I keep my residence here to be ready to obey any orders that the king of Babylon sends me by his servants. (See xli. 3.)

But gather ye wine, and summer-fruits, and oil.] Wine and oil are put by a metonymy for grapes and olives. It was now about the month of August, (compare xli. 1.) the proper season for gathering in the summer-fruits in that country. (See Deut. xvi. 13.)

Ver. 11. *Likewise, when all the Jews that were in Moab,* &c.] See the notes upon xii. 14. xv. 4.

Ver. 14. *Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael to slay thee?*] The king of the Ammonites had concerted this matter with Ishmael, with a design to make the Jews, who still remained in their own country, his vassals. (See xli. 10.)

CHAP. XLI.

ARGUMENT.

Ishmael treacherously killeth Gedaliah and his companions, with an intent to carry away the Jews that were with him captives into the country of the Ammonites. But Johanan recovers the captives, and purposeth to fly into Egypt.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass in the seventh month.*] Answering partly to our September, and partly to October. The murder of Gedaliah gave occasion for the fast of the seventh month, which the Jews observed after their return from captivity. (See Zech. vii. 5. viii. 19.)

Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, of the seed-royal.] He valued himself upon his extraction, and bare a grudge against Gedaliah, because he was set above him.

And the princes of the king, even ten men with him.] Some of the chief officers of state belonging to Zedekiah; (see xxxvi. 12. 21. xxxviii. 4.) these brought a great number of others with them as their retinue, or else they could not have made such a destruction as they did, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 3. *Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him —and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.*] That is, all those that joined in opposing Ishmael, and assisting Gedaliah: for several of the commanders, as well as the greatest part of the people, were still left alive, as appears by the sequel of the story. (See ver. 10, 11.)

Ver. 5. *Fourscore men having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves.*] These were tokens of great mourning, by which these persons expressed their grief for the destruction of the city and temple. Such expressions of sorrow were forbidden to be used at funeral obsequies, (see Lev. xix. 27, 28.) but might be lawfully used upon other mournful occasions; as hath been observed upon Isa. xv. 2.

With offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.] Some understand this as if devout persons brought their oblations to the place where the altar formerly stood, which they looked upon as consecrated ground: and this custom they think countenanced by the words of Baruch, i. 10. where the exiles at Babylon are supposed to *send money to buy offerings for the altar of the Lord,* after that Jerusalem *was taken and burnt:* (compare ver. 2.) others understand the *house of the Lord,* of an altar, or place of worship, erected by Gedaliah at Mizpah, in imitation of that which was formerly set up there by Samuel, (1 Sam. vii. 7. 9.) which place continued to be a proseucha, or place of worship, in aftertimes, as appears from 1 Maccab. iii. 46. There were many such sanctuaries, or places of worship, both in Judea and elsewhere, among the Jewish dispersions, as Dr. Prideaux hath shewed at large, in his Connect. of Scripture History, p. 387, &c.

Ver. 6. *Weeping all along as he went.*] As if he had sympathized with them.

Ver. 7. *Ishmael slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit.*] The Hebrew reads, *slew them into the midst of a pit.* We find the very same expression, 1 Maccab. vii. 19. a book translated out of Hebrew, as St. Jerome tells us, in Prologo Galeato. Of the same kind are the following expressions, (Psal. lxxiv. 7.) *They have defiled the dwelling-place of thy name unto the ground,* as our old translation reads out of the Hebrew. So Psal. lxxxix. 39. *Thou hast profaned his crown* by casting it *to the ground,* as the new translation supplies the sense.

Ver. 8. *Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field.*] Or, *in the country,* as the word is elsewhere used, by way of distinction, from a town or city. (See xl. 7. 13.) They promised to make him master of what they were worth, if he would spare their lives.

Ver. 9. *Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies—was it which Asa king of Israel made,* &c.] This pit was the ditch which Asa cast up against the walls of Mizpah, when he rebuilt and fortified it against the attempts of Baasha. (See 1 Kings xv. 22.)

Ver. 10. *And departed to go unto the Ammonites.*] See xl. 14.

Ver. 12. *By the great waters that are in Gibeon.*] Called the *pool of Gibeon,* 2 Sam. ii. 13.

Ver. 16. *The eunuchs.*] See xxxiv. 19. xxxviii. 7.

Ver. 17. *And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham.*] A parcel of ground which David had settled upon Chimham the son of Barzillai. (See 2 Sam. xix. 38. 40.)

Ver. 18. *Because of the Chaldeans,* &c.] They were afraid, lest they should impute this insurrection to the whole body of the Jews that were left in the land, as if they were desirous of restoring the government to the royal family.

CHAP. XLII.

ARGUMENT.

Johanan and the other captains desire Jeremiah to inquire of God what they should do, promising obedience to his will. The prophet assures them of safety in Judea, and destruction in Egypt, and reproves their hypocrisy in promising what they meant not to perform.

Ver. 1. *JEZANIAH the son of Hoshaiah.*] See xl. 8.

Ver. 2, 3. *Pray for us—that the Lord may shew us the way wherein we may walk.*] It is the constant method of hypocrites to pretend a profound submission to the will of God till that comes to cross their inclinations or interest.

Ver. 10. *I will build you up, and not pull you down.*] See xxiv. 6. xxxi. 28. xxxiii. 7.

For I repent me of the evil which I have done to you.]

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God is said in Scripture to repent, when he alters the outward methods of his providence, as hath been observed upon xviii. 11. So the expression here implies a declaration from God, that the punishments the Jews have already undergone have made satisfaction to his justice, as far as concerns this world, and that he will not continue the same severity towards them, unless they give him a new provocation.

Ver. 12. *And I will shew mercies to you, that he may cause you to return to your land.*] I will incline the heart of the king of Babylon to take pity on you: (see Psal. cvi. 46.) and so settle you in your own country, from whence you were driven during the late wars and distractions. (See xl. 11.)

Ver. 15. *If you wholly set your faces to go into Egypt.*] If you are fully resolved to go thither. (Compare Luke ix. 51.)

Ver. 16. *Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which you feared, shall overtake you there,* &c.] See xliv. 14. 18.

Ver. 18. *And ye shall be an execration, and a curse,* &c.] See the note on xxiv. 9.

Ver. 19. *The Lord hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah, go ye not into Egypt.*] God commanded the Jews, by Moses, not to have any commerce with Egypt: (see Deut. xvii. 16.) that they may not practise the idolatrous customs of that country; (see Lev. xviii. 3.) with whose idolatries they had been defiled during their sojourning there: (see Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) afterward he often reproved them by his prophets, for making alliances with Egypt. (See Isa. xxx. 2, &c. Ezek. xvii. 15.) There were particular reasons at this time for so severe a prohibition, as the words here and in the context import, *viz.* because the Jews either learned several of their idolatrous practices from the Egyptians, or at least were confirmed in those evil customs by their example. (See xliv. 8. 15. Ezek. xxix. 16.) Besides, it was the rival kingdom that contended for empire with the Babylonians. (See xxxvii. 5. xlvi. 2.) So the Jews going into Egypt for protection, was in effect refusing to submit themselves to the king of Babylon, to whom God had decreed the government of Judea, and all the neighbouring countries, (xxvii. 6.)

CHAP. XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

The leading men discrediting Jeremiah's prophecy, carry the people into Egypt, contrary to his advice: whereupon he foretells the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 2. *THEN spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah.*] Called Jezaniah, xlii. 1. We may observe many like instances in the books of Kings and Chronicles, of the same persons being called by two different names.

And all the proud men.] Who refused to obey Almighty God, when his commands crossed their own inclinations.

Saying to Jeremiah, The Lord hath not spoken by thee.] The constant method of hypocrites and infidels, who pretend they are not satisfied of the truth of Divine revelation, when the true cause of their unbelief is, that God's commands contradict their own lusts and appetites.

Ver. 3. *But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us.*] They would not directly accuse Jeremiah of partiality towards, or confederacy with, the Chaldeans, as his enemies had done formerly, (xxxvii. 13.) but they lay the blame upon Baruch, whom they knew to be an intimate companion of Jeremiah's, and to have been kindly used by the Chaldeans upon Jeremiah's account.

Ver. 5, 6. *But Johanan took the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations,* &c.] Chap. xl. 11. xli. 10.

Ver. 7. *Thus they came even to Tahapanes.*] See ii. 16. one of the principal cities of Egypt, and a place of residence for their kings. (See ver. 9.) The word is contracted to *hanes*, Isa. xxx. 4. and joined with Zoan, the chief city of the kingdom. Tahapanes gave a name to a queen of Egypt, (1 Kings xi. 19.) and is supposed by many to be the same city which was afterward called Daphnæ Pelusiacæ. St. Jerome tells us from an ancient tradition, that in this place the prophet Jeremiah was stoned to death by the Jews.

This tradition may receive some confirmation from that passage in the gospels, (Matt. xvi. 14. Luke ix. 19.) where, among other opinions concerning Christ, it is said, some thought him to be the prophet Jeremiah *risen from the dead.* Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the Jews thought the kingdom of the Messias should begin with the resurrection of the dead; and particularly, that some of the ancient prophets should rise again, and appear as harbingers to the Messias. (See his Horæ Hebr. on Matt. xvi. 13. xxvii. 52. and on Luke ix. 8.) And then, who could better pretend to that privilege than the prophet Jeremiah? who, beside his remarkable zeal and piety, sealed the truth with his blood. And the Jews were persuaded that the martyrs had a title to the resurrection above all others, as appears from 2 Maccab. vii. 9. 18. An opinion countenanced by St. John, Rev. xx. 4, 5. and afterward universally received in the Christian church.

Ver. 9. *Hide them in the clay, in the brick-kiln, that is by Pharaoh's house.*] Bricks were the chief materials which the Babylonians used in most stately buildings. (See Gen. xi. 3. and Prideaux's Script. Hist. ad an. A. C. 570.) So there was constant occasion for such a brick-kiln near Pharaoh's palace, yet this might be a great way from the palace itself: the courts of great kings being almost equal to a city for extent in ancient times: particularly the palace in Babylon was four miles in compass, according to Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii.

Ver. 10. *I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, my servant, and set his throne upon these stones.*] See the note on i. 15. xxv. 10.

Ver. 11. *And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt.*] See xlvi. 13.

And deliver such as are for death, to death.] See xv. 2. *Death* signifies here the pestilence, which the prophet foretells will overspread the country of Egypt, by reason of the famine, occasioned by sieges and other desolations of war.

Ver. 12. *And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt,* &c.] When God punisheth a heathen nation; as idolatry is one of the principal sins for which he visits, so he in a remarkable manner executes his vengeance upon their idols, who can neither save themselves, nor their worshippers. (See xlvi. 25. xlviii. 7. l. 2. li. 44. Exod. xii. 12. Isa. xix. 1. xxi. 9. xlvi. 1.)

And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a

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shepherd putteth on his garment.] He shall invest the land of Egypt, and take entire possession of it, just as a shepherd's garment covers his body all over. So calamities, when they surround men on every side, are compared to a garment, Psal. cix. 19. And this destruction shall come upon Egypt suddenly, and as it were in a moment; in which sense the verb *nût* or *natah* is taken, 1 Sam. xiv. 32. xv. 19.

A learned friend gives the text another turn: he supposes Nebuchadnezzar's army to have endured hard service before they invaded Egypt: this conjecture he grounds upon the words of Ezekiel, xxix. 18—20. So the prophet here promises, that Egypt should furnish them with all manner of necessaries, and defend them from the hardships they had been exposed to, just as a shepherd is secured from the injuries of the weather by a thick garment.

Ver. 13. *He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh.*] The same place that is called by Isaiah, (xix. 18.) *Nir heres*, which our margin rightly translates, *The city of the sun.* (See the note upon that place.)

And the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.] See Ezek. xxx. 13.

CHAP. XLIV.

ARGUMENT.

Jeremiah reproves the Jews in Egypt, for their continuance in idolatry, notwithstanding the exemplary judgments of God upon their own country and nation for that sin. Upon their obstinate refusal to reform their evil practices, he denounces utter destruction to them, and the king of Egypt, to whose protection they had betook themselves.

Ver. 1. *CONCERNING all the Jews—which dwell at Migdol.*] A place near the Red Sea. (See Exod. xiv. 2.)

And at Noph.] Commonly called Memphis, a royal seat formerly: near this place stands one of the pyramids, which is yet remaining.

And in the country of Pathros.] That is, the country of Thebais, as Bochart proves by several arguments, (Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 27.)

Ver. 3. *To serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, you, nor your fathers.*] Compare Deut. xiii. 6. xxxii. 17. These idols are opposed to the true God, called elsewhere *the God of their fathers; i. e.* He that had made himself known to them by so many miracles of mercy, and had promised to shew the same favour to their posterity, if they continued steadfast in their obedience.

Ver. 4. *Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets.*] See vii. 13. xxv. 4.

Ver. 5. *To burn no incense to other gods.*] See ver. 17. 21. xix. 13.

Ver. 7. *To cut off man and woman, infant and suckling, out of Judah.*] God designed that this remnant should have kept possession in Judea, when the rest of their brethren were carried away captive. (See xlii. 10.) But by their going into Egypt, and defiling themselves with the idolatries of that nation, they have provoked God to make an utter destruction of them. (See ver. 11, 12, 14. 27.)

Ver. 11. *Behold, I will set my face against you for evil.*] See xxi. 10. Lev. xvii. 10. xx. 5. Psal. xxxiv. 16.

Ver. 12, 13.] See xlii. 15—18.

[Ver. 14. *None of the remnant—shall escape—that they should return into the land of Judah.*] Scaliger observes out of Eusebius, that Artaxerxes Ochus, making an expedition into Egypt, removed a considerable colony of Jews out of that country, and carried them away as far as the Caspian Sea, and there settled them. These he thinks were the remainder of those Jews that went down into Egypt at this time. They were called by the other Jews, the Median captivity. See his notes on Euseb. numb. 1658.]

For none shall return, but such as shall escape.] See the note on iv. 27. None shall return but the remnant mentioned ver. 28. to whom I will grant that peculiar favour of being saved, or escaping out of the common destruction. (Compare l. 20.) This is the import of the word *peliti*, commonly rendered by the Septuagint, σωζόμενοι and ἀνασεσωσμένοι: (see li. 50. Isa. x. 20. xxxvii. 32. xlv. 20. lxvi. 20.) from whence the word Σωζόμενοι is applied in the New Testament, to signify those who embrace the gospel, and thereby are rescued from that destruction which is threatened to unbelievers. (See Acts ii. 47. 1 Cor. i. 18. 2 Cor. ii. 15.)

Ver. 17. *But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth.*] That which we have solemnly vowed to perform. (See ver. 25.) So the phrase is used, Numb. xxx. 12. Deut. xxiii. 23. Judg. xi. 36.

To burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings to her, &c.] To the moon and the rest of the host of heaven. (See the notes on vii. 18. xix. 13.)

For then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.] They compare their former condition before the invasion of Judea, and the siege of Jerusalem, with their present state: and argue, from the fallacious topic of worldly prosperity, that then they must needs have been in the right.

Ver. 19. *And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven.*] These are the words of the women, who were the most zealous promoters of this idolatry. (See ver. 15.)

Did we make her cakes to worship her?] See the note on vii. 18.

Ver. 22. *So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings.*] God's patience is elsewhere said to be wearied out by men's continued provocations. (See Isa. vii. 13. xliii. 24. Mal. ii. 17.)

Ver. 25. *We will surely perform our vows which we have vowed.*] They insist upon their unlawful vow as an obligation in conscience, which could not be dispensed with; just as Herod did upon his unlawful oath, Matt. xiv. 9.

Ver. 26. *I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord.*] I also have made a solemn vow, in opposition to that wicked one of yours, ver. 25.

That my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in the land of Egypt.] These Jews seem to have joined the worship of the true God with that of idols, as the Samaritans did before them, (2 Kings xvii. 33.) thereupon God declares he will not receive any such polluted worship at their hands, (compare Ezek. xx. 39.) nor suffer his name to be any longer profaned by such hypocrites, but will consume them by a sudden and general destruction; or will deliver them up to impenitence and utter apostacy.

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Ver. 27. *Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good.*] See xxxi. 28.

Ver. 28. *Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return.*] See ver. 14.

And all the remnant of Judah—that are gone into the land of Egypt, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.] Since they are so peremptory in abiding by their own vows and resolutions, (see ver. 16, 17. 25.) they shall see whose words shall stand good, or take effect, mine or theirs.

Ver. 30. *I will give Pharaoh-Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and of them that seek his life.*] Pharaoh was a common name to all the kings of Egypt. As the predecessor of this king was called Pharaoh-Nechoh by way of distinction, (2 Kings xxiii. 29.) so this king was called Pharaoh-Hophra, or Apries, as Herodotus calls him: he engaged in a battle with Amasis, by whom he was overcome and strangled. (See Archbishop Usher's Annals, ad A. M. 3435.)

CHAP. XLV.

ARGUMENT.

This prophecy was occasioned by the danger Baruch had incurred, by copying out a collection of all Jeremiah's prophecies, by his direction. (See xxxvi. 4. 26.) The design of it is to comfort Baruch against the apprehensions his fears suggested to him, by letting him know, that in these general calamities which should involve his own nation, together with the neighbouring countries, God would take him into his especial protection. The Septuagint, according to the Vatican copy, place this prophecy at the conclusion of the book, immediately before the fifty-second chapter.

Ver. 1. *WHEN he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah.*] See xxxvi. 1. 4. 32.

Ver. 3. *The Lord hath added grief to my sorrow.*] The sorrow which I felt for the threatenings denounced against my country and religion, are increased by my own troubles, being sought after by the king's command, in order to be put to death. (See xxxvi. 26.)

Ver. 4. *That which I have built will I break down,* &c.] The land and people which have so long flourished under the peculiar care of my providence, I resolve now to give up to utter destruction. (Compare xxxi. 28.)

Ver. 5. *And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.*] Dost thou aspire to honour and dignity in a time of common calamity? (Compare 2 Kings v. 26.)

Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh.] See the note on xxv. 26.

But thy life will I give unto thee for a prey.] See the note on xxi. 9.

CHAP. XLVI.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter contains two prophecies against Egypt: the first fulfilled immediately after the publication: the other foretelling the entire conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, which was fulfilled six-and-thirty years afterward.

Ver. 1. *THE word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the gentiles.*] This title belongs to this and the five following chapters: and refers to that general denunciation of God's judgments upon the countries round about Judea, contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of this prophecy, from the thirteenth verse to the end of the chapter. For which reason, in the Vatican and Alexandrian copies of the Septuagint, these six chapters follow immediately after xxv. 13. where express mention is made of the book which Jeremiah had prophesied against the nations: which book is contained in this and the following chapters of this prophecy.

Ver. 2. *Against the army of Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish.*] This was the second battle which the king of Babylon (called the king of Assyria, 2 Kings xxiii. 29.) fought with Pharaoh-Nechoh near this city. In the former of those expeditions was Josiah killed. (See 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.)

Which Nebuchadnezzar smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah.] This is coincident with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to the Scripture account, which begins his reign two years before his father's death. (See the note on xxv. 1.) For Nebuchadnezzar went upon this expedition by his father's command: and upon this victory, Jehoiakim, who had been made king of Judea by Pharaoh-Nechoh, (2 Kings xxiii. 34.) became tributary to Nebuchadnezzar. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 1. 7. and the notes upon Jer. xxii. 19.)

Ver. 2, 3. *Order ye the buckler and shield,* &c.] The prophet ironically encourages the Egyptians to make ready all warlike preparations, which yet he foresees will in the end signify nothing. (See the following verse, and ver 14. and compare li. 12. Nahum ii. 1. iii. 14.)

Ver. 5. *For fear was round about, saith the Lord.*] A panic fear seized the whole army. (Compare xlix. 29. l. 37. li. 30. Isa. xix. 16.)

Ver. 6. *Let not the swift flee away,* &c.] The words imply, that it was God's command that none of the Egyptian army should escape. Or else the imperative may be taken for the future, by a usual enallage. (See the note on xxv. 27.)

They shall stumble and fall towards the north, by the river Euphrates.] The river Euphrates was northward from Judea. So Babylon is described as lying northward, being situate upon that river. (See i. 14. iv. 6. vi. 1.)

Ver. 7, 8. *Who is this that cometh up as a flood?* &c.] In order to raise an expectation of some mighty enterprise, the prophet describes, by way of vision, the march of the Egyptian army, coming on like a flood, and carrying all before it: which expressions allude to the overflowing of the river Nile. (Compare likewise xlvii. 2. Isa. viii. 7, 8. Dan. xi. 26. xi. 22. Amos viii. 8.)

Ver. 9. *Let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians, the Lybians—and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow.*] These names in Hebrew are *Cush,* and *Phut,* and *Lud,* who were the Egyptians' allies, and are mentioned together as such, Ezek. xxx. 5. which makes it probable that they are all Africans. *Cush,* though it often signifies Arabia, yet sometimes denotes Ethiopia, as hath been shewed upon xiii. 23. *Phut* is rendered Lybia, by our interpreters here, and Ezek. xxx. 5. But Phut and Lubim

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are spoken of as a distinct people, Nahum iii. 9. Phut may probably signify Mauritania, and Lud, or Ludim, the people of Meroe. These were famous for the use of the bow, as it is expressed both here and Isa. lxvi. 19.

Ver. 10. *For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts.*] The *day of the Lord* often signifies the day of his vengeance. (See Isa. xiii. 6. Joel i. 15. ii. 1. Amos v. 18. Zeph. i. 14, 15.) From thence it comes to signify the day of judgment in the New Testament, of which all other days of vengeance are the earnests and forerunners.

A day of vengeance, that he may revenge himself of his adversaries.] Of the idols of Egypt, and their worshippers. (See ver. 25. xliii. 12, 13.)

And the sword shall devour, &c.] See Isa. xxxiv. 6.

For the Lord God hath a sacrifice in the north country, &c.] The slaughter of men is called a sacrifice, because it makes some kind of satisfaction and atonement to God's justice. (Isa. xxxiv. 6. Ezek. xxxix. 17. Zeph. i. 7.)

Ver. 11. *Go up into Gilead, and take balm.*] Gilead was famous for producing balm, and such-like healing gums. (See the note on viii. 22.) The prophet, alluding to the custom of men's going thither for relief in dangerous infirmities, ironically advises the Egyptians to try all the methods they can think of, to prevent that destruction that threatens them: but all their endeavours will be in vain. (Compare li. 8.)

O virgin, the daughter of Egypt.] Those cities or countries are called *virgins* which never were conquered. (See the note on xiv. 17. and compare Isa. xlvii. 1.) Egypt was grown great by its conquests, particularly by the former battle at Carchemish; (see ver. 2.) and did not apprehend itself in any danger of being conquered. *The daughter of Egypt,* is the same with Egypt. (See ver. 19. and the notes on iv. 11.)

Ver. 12. *The nations have heard of thy shame.*] Of thine armies being shamefully beaten, and running away.

For the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty.] When an army is once broken and disordered, multitudes are a hinderance one to another, and one part helps to destroy another. (See ver. 16. 21.)

Ver. 13. *The word of the Lord—how Nebuchadnezzar should come to smite the land of Egypt.*] Compare xliii. 10. This is a distinct prophecy from the former, as was observed in the Argument to that chapter. The same destruction of Egypt is at large foretold and described by Ezekiel, chap. xxix.—xxxii.

Ver. 14. *Publish in Migdol.*] See xliv. 1.

Stand fast, and prepare thee.] Prepare for war, and resolve to keep your ground, and not to yield to the enemy. (Compare ver. 2, 3.)

Ver. 15. *Why are the valiant men swept away?*] The Hebrew word *abbir,* rendered *valiant,* is sometimes spoken of God, as Gen. xlix. 24. sometimes is a title given to angels, Psal. lxxviii. 25. and here the Septuagint understand it of Apis, the idol of Egypt, (compare ver. 20. 25.) who may properly be said to be conquered, when the nation that put themselves under his protection was subdued. (See xliii. 12.)

Ver. 16. *Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity.*] The words of the Egyptian allies. (See ver. 9. 21.)

Ver. 17. *They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.*] He brags what great things he will do, but he does not bring his forces together till the season of the year for action is over. (Compare viii. 20.)

Ver. 18. *Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.*] Some think the expression compares Nebuchadnezzar, a lofty and aspiring conqueror, to Tabor and Carmel, two of the highest mountains in Judea. Others understand it thus: He will as surely come, as that part of Judea which is joined to Tabor is enclosed with mountains, and as Carmel is encompassed with the sea. (See 1 Kings xviii. 42, 43.) Or lastly, the verse may be expounded thus: Though Egypt were as inaccessible as the top of Mount Tabor, and begirt with the sea like Carmel, yet the enemy should come upon her, and make an entire conquest of her.

Ver. 19. *O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt.*] Compare xlviii. 18. Countries and cities are usually compared to women (such representations being very common, particularly on medals), and sometimes to young women, when their wealth makes them soft and effeminate. (See Isa. xlvii. 1.)

Furnish thyself to go into captivity.] The expression is ironical, implying, that instead of the rich and goodly furniture wherein she did pride herself, she should be carried away captive, naked and bare, and wanting all manner of conveniences. (See Isa. xx. 4. xlvii. 2, 3.)

Ver. 20. *Egypt is like a very fair heifer.*] In the foregoing verse, the prophet compared Egypt to a delicate young woman: here he resembles her to a fat and well-favoured heifer. (Compare l. 11.) In which comparison, as Grotius not improbably conjectures, there is an allusion to their god Apis, who was a bull remarkable for his beauty, and the fine spots or marks he had about him.

It cometh out of the north.] See ver. 6. 10.

Ver. 21. *Also her hired men are in the midst of her like fatted bullocks.*] The auxiliary troops which the king of Egypt hath hired, (see ver. 9. 16.) are like bullocks fatted up, and fit for the slaughter. (See l. 27. Isa. xxxiv. 7. Ezek. xxxix. 18.)

They did not stand, [in the fight, see ver. 15.] *because the day of their calamity was upon them.*] Their *day was come, even the time of their visitation,* as it is expressed, l. 27.

Ver. 22. *The voice thereof shall go like a serpent.*] They shall not shout like conquerors, but make a feeble noise, like the hissing of a serpent when it is pursued: and shall speak in a very submissive and humble tone. (See Isa. xxix. 4. Micah vii. 16, 17.)

For they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.] The destruction of Egypt is described by the metaphor of cutting down the trees of a forest. (Compare Isa. x. 33, 34. xiv. 8. xxxvii. 24.)

Ver. 23. *They shall cut down her forest, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers.*] Cities, and their stately buildings, are elsewhere compared to the trees of a forest: (see the note on xxi. 14.) so here the text imports, that though the cities of Egypt were never so numerous and large, yet the Chaldean army should plunder and destroy them, because their number is proportionable to such an enterprise. Armies are often compared to grasshoppers, and such-like insects, both for their multi-

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tudes, and because they make a general consumption. (See Judg. vi. 5. vii. 12. Joel ii. 4, 5.)

Ver. 25. *I will punish the multitude of No.*] The Hebrew reads, *Ammon Minnó*, which may be literally rendered, *Ammon of No:* the same place is expressed in Ezekiel by *Haman No*, (xxx. 15.) and in Nahum it is called *No Amon*, (iii. 8.) The name is generally thought to be derived from Jupiter Hammon, whose temple was there; and is supposed to be the same city which is called Thebes by the heathen writers, famous for its hundred gates in Homer's time. It is rendered Διόσπολις by the Septuagint, which is the Greek name for Thebes. Which city was famous for the worship of Jupiter Hammon, as appears by a passage in Plato's Phædrus. (See Dr. Cudworth's Intellectual System, p. 339.) [Plutarch informs us, that *Hammon*, in the Egyptian language, signifies the same with Ζεὺς, or Jupiter, lib. de Isid. et Osir. p. 354. edit. Francofurt.] The Vulgar Latin interprets it Alexandria; but that was a city of later date, and a place of no note in the times the prophets speak of.

And Egypt, with their gods.] As the judgment threatened upon No was an instance of the Divine vengeance upon the idol Hammon, and his worshippers: so the same vengeance shall reach the rest of Egypt with their respective idols. (See xliii. 12, 13.)

And their kings.] The governors of the several *nomi*, or provinces, called *kingdoms* by Isaiah, xix. 2.

Ver. 26. *And afterward it shall be inhabited.*] After the space of forty years. (See Ezek. xxix. 13.)

Ver. 27, 28. *But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob*, &c.] See xxx. 10, 11. from whence these two verses are taken, containing a comfortable promise to the Jews, that God will not make an utter destruction of them, as he hath done of several other nations, against whom the prophets have denounced his judgments: but will still preserve a remnant of them, to whom he will perform the promises made to their fathers.

CHAP. XLVII.

ARGUMENT.

Jeremiah had foretold that the Philistines should be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, together with the rest of their neighbours. (See xxv. 20.) This probably came to pass during the time of the siege of Tyre, which lasted thirteen years, as Josephus shews out of Philostratus, and the Phœnician Annals, Antiq. lib. x. cap. 11. and lib. contra App. p. 1046. Accordingly we find Tyre and Zidon here mentioned, (ver. 4.) as sharers in the common calamity.

Ver. 1. *BEFORE that Pharaoh smote Gaza.*] When the Philistines' country was in seeming quiet and security. The destruction of Gaza might probably happen, after Pharaoh's victories at Megiddo and Carchemish, when Judea became tributary to him. (See 2 Chron. xxxv. 20. xxxvi. 3.) Amos foretells the destruction of Gaza, i. 6. but it is not certain, that the same event is foretold by both prophets.

Ver. 2. *Waters shall rise up out of the north, and there shall be an overflowing flood.*] The usual metaphor to describe the march of an army that overruns a country. (See xlvi. 8.) By the *north* is meant in this prophecy the land of the Chaldeans. (See i. 13, 14.)

Ver. 3. *At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses*, &c.] Compare Nahum iii. 2. *Abbirauh* properly signifies horses, and should be so translated, viii. 16. (See the note there.)

The fathers shall not look back to their children, &c.] Shall not regard them; so the phrase is taken, Numb. xvi. 15. Our translation renders the word there, *respect not*, or shew any concern for their safety. They shall be so dismayed and dispirited, that they shall scarce be able to save themselves.

Ver. 4. *To cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth.*] The siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar was an action famous in the histories of that age, which lasted thirteen years. (See the Argument to the chapter, and compare Ezek. chap. xxvii. xxviii.) Zidon was partaker of the same fate with Tyre, both in prosperity and adversity: (see Isa. xxiii. 2. 4.) and her destruction is joined with that of Tyre by Ezekiel, chap. xxviii.

The remnant of the country of Caphtor.] Or, *the isle of Caphtor*; see ver. 7. and the note on Isa. xx. 6. called the *remnant of the Philistines*, Amos. i. 8. and the *remnant of the sea-coast*, Ezek. xxv. 16. The expression denotes either a colony transplanted from Caphtor, or else that small remainder of the Philistines, after they had been in a manner all destroyed in former times, according to the judgments denounced against them by Amos, i. 8. and Isaiah, xiv. 19, &c. and we may perhaps add those in Zephaniah, ii. 5, &c. (Compare xxv. 20.) Caphtor, or the Caphtorim, were the ancient inhabitants of Palestine. (See Deut. ii. 23.) The Caphtorim and Caslubim were two neighbouring nations, and nearly related to each other, being both descended from Mizraim the father of the Egyptians: (see Gen. x. 13, 14.) which may be the reason why Moses there derives the pedigree of the Philistines from the latter of these two. The ancients generally suppose Caphtor to be the same with Cappadocia. These two nations might go out of Egypt, their native soil, and settle themselves in Cappadocia, where they passed under the general appellation of Caphtorim, and afterward return back towards their own native country, and settle in Palestine. (See Amos ix. 7.) But others think it more probable, that Caphtor is the same with Crete, which we know is an island properly so called. The chief ground of this opinion is, that the Cherethims or Cherethites are the same with the Philistines, as appears from Ezek. xxv. 16. Zeph. ii. 5. 1 Sam. xxx. 14. compared with ver. 16. Now the Cherethims are generally supposed to be the Cretians, and the sound of the word confirms the conjecture. (See Vitringa's commentary on Isa. xiv. 29.)

Ver. 5. *Baldness is come upon Gaza—how long wilt thou cut thyself?*] Under great calamities, it was usual for men to express their grief by shaving their heads, and cutting their flesh. (See xli. 5. xlviii. 37.)

Ver. 6. *O sword of the Lord.*] When God devotes a nation to be destroyed, he is said to give commission to a sword to pass through the land. (See Ezek. xiv. 17. xxi. 3.)

How long will it be ere thou be quiet?] The prophet speaks in the words or complaints the Philistines made, who saw themselves devoted to destruction; or else as sympathizing with their calamities. (See xlviii. 31, 32.)

Ver. 7. *How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given*

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it a charge against Ashkelon, &c.] The prophet returns an answer to the foregoing verse, importing that the havoc made by the sword amongst the Philistines, was the effect of God's irreversible purpose and decree.

CHAP. XLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The following prophecies against Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the neighbouring countries, seem to have been fulfilled, during the long siege of Tyre, mentioned in the Argument of the foregoing chapter. (Compare Ezek. xxv. 1, &c.) See Archbishop Usher's Annals of the Old Testament, ad A. M. 3419. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 11. who places these events five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah in his prophecy against Moab, borrows several expressions out of Isaiah's prophecy against the same people, though that was probably fulfilled several years before.

Ver. 1. *WOE to Nebo! for it is spoiled; Kiriathaim is confounded.*] Two cities of Moab. (See Numb. xxxii. 37. xxxiii. 47. Isa. xv. 2.) The latter of these was given by Moses to the Reubenites, as appears by Josh. xiii. 10. but the Moabites afterward recovered the possession of it, as they did Dibon, Sibmah, and other places. (Compare those texts in Numbers and Joshua, with Isa. xv. 2. xvi. 8, 9. and the twenty-first and the following verses of this chapter.)

Ver. 2. *There shall be no praise of Moab.*] The *glory of Moab* shall be *contemned,* as the prophet Isaiah speaks, xvi. 14. every thing for which it was commendable shall be destroyed.

In Heshbon they have devised evil against it, &c.] Heshbon was the capital city of the Moabites. (See Numb. xxi. 26.) When the Chaldeans made themselves masters of Heshbon, a place of that importance, they consulted how to carry on their conquests over the rest of the country: the word *Heshbon* signifies, in Chaldee, a *device,* or consultation. So the prophet here alludes to the name of the city. (See the like allusions, l. 21. Micah i. 10. 14. 25.)

Also thou shalt be cut down, [or *brought to silence,* compare Isa. xv. 1.] *O Madmen.*] A city in Moab. (Isa. xxv. 10.)

Ver. 3. *A voice of weeping shall be from Horonaim.*] See Isa. xv. 5.

Ver. 4. *Her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.*] Both small and great were involved in this calamity. But the word *tseir,* signifies *great* as well as *little:* and so the Chaldee paraphrast renders it here, *lords:* which sense of the words is at large asserted and proved by our learned Dr. Pocock, in his Miscellaneous Notes upon Porta Mosis, p. 19, &c.

Ver. 5. *For in the going up of Luith,* &c.] See Isa. xv. 5.

Ver. 6. *And be like the heath in the wilderness.*] Resort to the most solitary places you can think of, where nothing grows but barren shrubs: (see xvii. 6.) and where no enemy can find you out.

Ver. 7. *Because thou hast trusted in thy works.*] Or, *In thy possession:* for so the word is translated, 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

And Chemosh shall go into captivity.] The idol of the Moabites, Numb. xxi. 29. (See the note on xliii. 12.)

Ver. 8. *The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed.*] Those that live in the country, with their flocks and pastures, shall be involved in the same calamity with the inhabitants of the cities.

Ver. 9. *Give wings to Moab, that it may flee and get away.*] It is not a common speed that can deliver him from that imminent danger which threatens him. (See ver. 28. and compare Psal. lv. 6.)

Ver. 10. *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully,* &c.] God executes his judgments upon sinners, by the ministry of men, and those oftentimes as great sinners, as those that suffer by them. He had declared by Jeremiah his purpose of making the Chaldeans his instruments in punishing the Jews, and the neighbouring countries. (See xxv. 9.) Their success answered the prediction, and Nebuchadnezzar seems to have looked upon Jeremiah as a prophet, and had a particular regard to his character. (See xxxix. 11.) Being thus assured that he had a commission from God, he might confidently proceed in his conquests, and it would have been a fault to have shewed mercy to those whom he had good reason to believe, that God had marked out for destruction. Such an unseasonable act of mercy is highly blamed in Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 11. and in Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 42. God's judgments are often denounced in form of imprecation. (See Deut. xxvii. 15, &c. Judg. v. 23. Gal. i. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 16.)

Ver. 11. *Moab hath been at ease from his youth.*] He hath never felt any calamity, since that judgment foretold by Isaiah, and inflicted by Shalmaneser. So that there were forty years between that captivity and this here spoken of. (See Archbishop Usher's Annals, ad An. M. 3280. and 3419.)

And he hath settled on his lees.] He hath flourished in peace, and grown rich, as wine that feeds on its lees; (compare Zech. i. 12.) when the Jews during that time have suffered several captivities.

Therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.] As generous wines retain their strength as long as they continue in the lees; so he retained his wonted pride and luxury, and doth not depart from any of those vices which a long prosperity has occasioned. (See Isa. xvi. 6.)

Ver. 12. *I will send unto him wanderers,* &c.] The Chaldean soldiers that came out of a foreign country: these shall make a prey of him, and shall carry off as much of his wealth as they can, and spoil the rest. (Compare xiii. 14.)

Ver. 13. *And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh,* &c.] They shall be disappointed in their expectations of succours from their tutelary idol; (see Judg. xi. 24. 1 Kings xi. 7.) as the ten tribes have been in the trust they reposed in the calf they worshipped at Beth-el. (See Hos. viii. 5. x. 6.)

Ver. 15. *Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities.*] Or, [the spoiler] *is gone up against her cities.* (Compare ver. 18.)

His chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter.] Compare l. 27. The same thing is otherwise expressed, by bringing down to the grave, or the pit.

Ver. 17. *All ye that are about him bemoan him, and all ye that knew his name.*] His calamities are so great, as must needs make all that see him, or have heard of his former fame and glory, bewail his misfortunes.

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How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!] Compare Isa. xiv. 5. A staff or rod is an emblem of authority, and thence comes to signify a kingdom, or government, especially such a one as oppresses its subjects, or neighbours. (See Isa. ix. 4. x. 5.)

Ver. 18. *Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon.*] Thou that art softened with luxury and effeminacy. (See xlvi. 18.) Dibon was one of the chief cities of Moab. (See Numb. xxi. 30. Isa. xv. 2.)

Come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst.] Submit to a mean condition, wherein thou shalt feel the want of all conveniences of life. The Hebrew language expresses a barren land, which yields no food or sustenance, by a thirsty ground. (See Psal. lxiii. 2. Isa. xxxv. 7. Ezek. xix. 13.)

Ver. 19. *O inhabitants of Arcer* [a town in the borders of Moab; see Deut. ii. 36.] *stand by the way, and espy,* &c.] The prophet describes the great concern and fear that was upon them, which made them hearken to every little report that was stirring.

Ver. 20. *Howl and cry.*] There will be just occasion for a general lamentation.

Tell ye in Arnon.] A country which took its name from the river Arnon, which was upon the border of Moab. (See Numb. xx. 28.)

Ver. 21. *And judgment is come upon the plain country.*] See ver. 8.

Ver. 24. *And upon Kerioth.*] See ver. 41. Amos ii. 2.

And upon Bozrah.] The same town that is called Bezer, Deut. iv. 43. Josh. xxi. 36. A different place from Bozrah, which belonged to the land of Edom, (xlix. 13.)

Ver. 25. *The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm broken.*] Strength is often expressed by the horn, wherein the strength of bulls, and such-like creatures, consists; and by the arm, wherein human strength doth chiefly discover itself.

Ver. 26. *Make ye him drunken,* &c.] God's judgments are represented under the metaphor of a cup of intoxicating liquors. (See the note on xxv. 15.)

Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and shall be in derision.] The judgments which God sends upon him shall expose him to the scorn of his enemies: just as a drunken man is the object of men's laughter and derision. (Compare Habak. ii. 16.)

Ver. 27. *For was not Israel a derision unto thee?*] Didst not thou insult over the calamities of the Jews, when they were carried away captive? (See the note on xii. 14. and compare Ezek. xxv. 8. Zeph. ii. 8.) Israel is here put for Judah. (See the note on xviii. 13.)

Was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippest for joy.] Though the sins of Israel were great in the sight of God, yet he had done no injury to the Moabites; so there was no reason they should use him with the same despite and contempt as if he had been a common thief taken in the very fact, whom every one thinks they have a right to abuse. (Compare ii. 26.) The latter part of the verse may be thus rendered, *For the words thou hast spoken against him, thou shalt be carried captive.* This interpretation of the words the Vulgar Latin follows, and the verb *thithnoded* may very well be rendered to this sense. (See the note on xxxi. 18.)

Ver. 28. *O inhabitants of Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock,* &c.] Flee away, and hide yourselves, if you can, from these calamities which are coming upon you. (See ver. 9. and compare Psal. lv. 6, 7.)

Ver. 29. *We have heard the pride of Moab,* &c.] Whereby he hath *magnified himself against the Lord,* (ver. 26.) and *against the people of the Lord,* (Zech. ii. 10.)

Ver. 30. *I know his wrath—but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it.*] Or, *his strength shall not avail* answerably to his wrath; his power shall not be answerable to his malice. (See the note on Isa. xvi. 6.) The latter part of the sentence may be thus rendered, *But it is not right, his liars do not that which is right.* The word *baddim,* sometimes signifies those that pretend to the arts of divination, or foretelling what is to come. (See l. 36.) If we take the word in this sense, the meaning of the sentence is, That although the soothsayers and magicians, upon whose skill Moab relies, promise him good success, and thereby encourage his pride and arrogance; yet, in the event, it will appear that there was nothing of truth in what they said.

Ver. 31. *Therefore I will howl for Moab.*] See the note on Isa. xv. 5.

And I will cry out for all Moab.] The whole country of Moab: the phrase is the same with that of *whole Palestina,* Isa. xiv. 31.

My heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres.] See Isa. xvi. 7. 11.

Ver. 32. *O vine of Sibmah, I will bewail thee with the weeping of Jazer.*] The expressions denote the destruction of the fruitful vineyards of Sibmah. The loss of which the neighbouring places of Jazer would have reason to lament. (Compare Isa. xvi. 9.)

Thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer.] The words, pursuing the metaphor of a vineyard, imply that the principal inhabitants (compare Nahum ii. 2.) are carried away, or forced to fly their country, and pass over the sea, that is, the river of Jazer; a stream that runs into the river Arnon, the border of Moab. (Numb. xxi. 13.) All lakes and rivers are called *seas* in the Hebrew language.

Ver. 33. *And joy and gladness is taken out of the plentiful field,* &c.] The gathering in the harvest, and other fruits of the earth, is usually accompanied with great expressions of joy; (see Isa. ix. 3. Joel i. 12.) for which there will be no occasion, when the enemy has spoiled or carried away their crop and vintage. (Compare Isa. xvi. 10.)

Ver. 34. *From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice,* &c.] When Heshbon was taken by the enemy, (see ver. 2. 15.) the cry of the inhabitants reached as far as Elealeh and Jahaz: the same was likewise heard from Zoar to Horonaim. (See Isa. xv. 4, 5.)

As an heifer of three years old.] See the note on Isa. xv. 5. Dr. Lightfoot, in his Chorographical Inquiries before his Horæ Hebraicæ upon St. John, chap. 3. n. 8. proposes another rendering of these words, *Eglah Shelishiah,* and interprets the sentence thus, *From Zoar unto Horonaim, even to the third Eglah.* He supposes several places might be called by the name of Eglah, particularly there is one of them mentioned, Ezek. xlvii. 10. and this in the text might be called the *third Eglah,* by way of distinction.

For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate.] See the note on Isa. xv. 9.

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Ver. 35. *Moreover, I will cause him to cease in Moab that offereth in the high places.*] See ver. 7. and Isa. xvi. 12.

Ver. 36. *Therefore my heart shall sound for Moab like pipes,* &c.] My bowels are moved within me, I groan inwardly for trouble and anguish. (Compare iv. 19. Job xxx. 27. see Isa. xvi. 11. Lam. i. 20. and the notes upon xv. 15.) The music of pipes was used at funerals. (See Sir Norton Knatchbull's notes on Matt. ix. 23.)

Ver. 37. *For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped,* &c.] See the note upon xli. 5. and compare xlvii. 5. Isa. xv. 2.

Ver. 38. *There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab.*] See the notes upon Isa. xv. 3.

For I have broken Moab as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure.] As earthen vessels, if they are not fit for the use to which they were designed, are broken to pieces, without any concern or regret, (compare xix. 11.) so as never to be repaired: thus God will deal with Moab.

Ver. 39. *They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down?*] Or, *Broken to pieces,* as the word is rendered l. 2. The prophet persists in the allusion to the breaking of an earthen vessel.

Ver. 40. *Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and spread his wings over Moab.*] Conquerors are often compared to eagles, and other birds of prey; (see xlix. 22. Deut. xxviii. 49. Dan. vii. 4.) and the encamping their armies is represented by spreading their wings. (See Isa. viii. 8. and the note there.)

Ver. 41. *And the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day, shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.*] They shall be dismayed at the apprehension of the evils that are coming upon them, and shall lose their wonted courage and resolution. (Compare vi. 24. xxx. 6. xlix. 22. 24. l. 37. 43. li. 30. Isa. xiii. 8. Lam. i. 6. Nahum iii. 33.)

Ver. 43, 44. *Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee,* &c.] The words are taken out of Isa. xxiv. 17, 18. (See the notes there.)

I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation.] See xi. 23.

Ver. 45. *They that fled, stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force.*] They that fled for fear of the enemy's forces, thought to find a shelter and safeguard in Heshbon, a strong fenced city. (See ver. 2.) But the Hebrew *miccoah, because of the force,* may be rendered *for want of force or strength.* (Compare x. 14.) And so the preposition *min* is translated by our interpreters, Psal. cx. 24. Lam. iv. 9. according to the old translation; and Micah iii. 6. where we read in the Hebrew, *Therefore night shall be unto you from a vision,* or, *because of a vision:* which our translators rightly render, *That ye shall not have a vision.*

But a fire shall come out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon.] That is, of the city of Sihon, meaning Heshbon. (See Numb. xxi. 28.) When the enemies once possessed themselves of Heshbon, the principal city of Moab, they quickly spread like fire over the rest of the country. So that the prophet fitly applies to the present case the words of an ancient poem, or *epinikion,* made upon Sihon's conquests over Moab, and recited by Moses, Numb. xxi. 27, 28, &c.

And shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.] By the *corner* may be meant the borders, or extreme parts of the country. So the Hebrew word signifies, Numb. xxxiv. 3. Nehem. xi. 22. or it may mean the *nobility,* who are the stay and support of the government, expressed likewise by the *crown of the head,* in the following sentence: or else both expressions may allude to the custom practised in those countries, of polling and cutting round the corners or forepart of their hair, concerning which see the note on xxv. 26. By the *tumultuous* are meant those that through pride indulge themselves in their state and plenty, and insult over their inferiors.

Ver. 46. *Woe be unto thee, O Moab!*] This verse is likewise taken out of Numb. xxi. 19.

The people of Chemosh perisheth.] People are sometime denominated from the god they worship. So the Jews are called the people of the Lord, or Jehovah.

Ver. 47. *Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days.*] The Moabites were afterward restored to their country, as appears from Josephus, Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 17. *versus finem.* But these and such-like promises of mercy after judgment, are chiefly to be understood of the conversion of the gentiles under the gospel, called the *latter days* in the prophets. (Compare xii. 15—17. xlix. 6. 39. Isa. xviii. 7. xix. 18, &c. xxiii. 18.) The conversion of idolaters is expressed by *returning from their captivity,* Ezek. xvi. 53.

CHAP. XLIX.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter is a collection of prophecies against several of those nations, against which Jeremiah had a general commission to declare God's judgments, xxv. 3. Concerning the time when they were fulfilled, see the Argument of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 1. *HATH Israel no sons?—why then doth their kings inherit Gad?* &c.] The Septuagint read Gilead, which agrees with the words of Amos in his prophecy against the Ammonites, (Amos i. 13.) But the sense is all one; for in Amos we are to understand that part of Gilead which belonged to the tribe of Gad. God sorely afflicted those parts of the kingdom of Israel that lay eastward of Jordan, first by Hazael, (2 Kings x. 33.) afterward by Tiglath-Pileser, (xv. 29.) and then delivered up the whole kingdom to be carried captive by Shalmaneser: (chap. xvii.) after which time, it is probable, the Ammonites took occasion to possess themselves of Gilead, that lay near their territories: but God's dispossessing the Israelites gave them no right to invade their inheritance; (see Zeph. ii. 8.) especially when they had been so tender of the Ammonites' right, as not to invade their possession in their march towards the land of Canaan. (See Deut. iv. 19. 2 Chron. xx. 10.)

Ver. 2. *I will cause the noise of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites.*] The principal city of that country. (See Amos i. 14. Ezek. xxv. 5.)

Her daughters shall be burnt with fire.] That is, the lesser cities which are reckoned as so many daughters to the mother-city. To the same sense the *daughters of Judah* are joined with Zion, as the metropolis, Psal. xlviii. 11. xcvii. 8. and see the following verse.

Then shall Israel be heir to them that were his heirs.]

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The Jews made themselves masters of the Ammonites, and the neighbouring countries under the Maccabees. (See Maccab. v. 6, 7. and compare Ezek. xxv. 14.)

The words *heir* and *inheritance*, in the Hebrew, signify any real and lasting possession: (see Psal. lxxxii. 8.) the expression being taken from the usual manner of conveying land among them, which was by inheritance.

Ver. 3. *Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled.*] When Ai (not the place mentioned Josh. viii. but) a city of the Ammonites is destroyed: then it is time for Heshbon, the chief city of Moab, to lament her danger, for her turn comes next. (See xlviii. 2.)

Cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird ye with sackcloth.] Ye tender women, inhabitants of Rabbah, that are not used to hardships, bemoan yourselves with the deepest expressions of mourning and sorrow. (Compare Isa. xxxii. 11. Jer. iv. 8. vi. 26.)

Lament, and run to and fro by the hedges.] Try to hide yourselves in the thickets, and remove from one place to another for fear of being discovered: or the words may be expounded thus: Lament, ye inhabitants of the lesser towns, and run to and fro in your villages, as uncertain reports shall prompt you to flee from the enemy. So Schindler expounds the word *gederoth*, Psal. lxxxix. 40. (See iv. 29.)

For their king shall go into captivity.] Or, *Milcom shall go into captivity:* so the word may likewise be rendered in the first verse. Milcom was the idol of the Ammonites. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 13.) The idols always shared in the prosperity or calamities that befel their worshippers. (Compare xlviii. 7. and see the note on xliii. 12.)

Ver. 4. *Wherefore gloriest thou in thy valleys, thou flowing valley?*] That is, in the riches of thy fat and plentiful valleys, which overflow with abundance of all things. (Compare Isa. xxviii. 1. 4.)

O backsliding daughter.] See the note on vii. 24.

That trusted in her treasures, &c.] Thought she had money enough to furnish herself with all things necessary for her defence. Such a confidence and carnal security as this, is elsewhere severely threatened. (See xxi. 13. Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.)

Ver. 5. *Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee.*] When God gives up a people to destruction, he commonly takes from them their usual courage, so that a *thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one.* (Compare ver. 29. xlviii. 43.) This the heathens expressed by a *panic terror.* Or the word *fear* may denote a hostile army, the cause of fear and terror. (Compare xv. 8.)

And ye shall be driven out every one right forth.] So as not to dare look back, but fly for their lives that way which lies next. (See xlvi. 5. Amos iv. 3.)

And none shall gather up him that wandereth.] None shall bring him that flies from the enemy to his house, or afford him any shelter or accommodation. (Compare Isa. xvi. 3.)

Ver. 6. *And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon.*] See 1 Maccab. v. 5. and the note upon xlviii. 47.

Ver. 7. *Is wisdom no more in Teman?*] The eastern part of the world (by which is chiefly meant Arabia, and the adjacent countries, see the note on Isa. xi. 14.) was famous for the study of wisdom, or philosophy as it was called in later times. (See 1 Kings iv. 30.) The Edomites put in their claim to this prerogative, as appears from the text, and the parallel place of Obadiah, (ver. 8.) as also from the book of Job, where Eliphaz, one of the disputants, is called the Temanite, as being descended from Teman, Esau's grandson, who gave name to the city or country of Teman, elsewhere mentioned. (See Amos i. 12. Obad. ver. 9. Habak. iii. 3.) Unless we suppose it the same Tema, mentioned xxv. 23. Isa. xxi. 14. which took its name from Tema, Ishmael's son, Gen. xxv. 15.

Is counsel perished from the prudent?] When God designs a people for destruction, he deprives them of that common prudence and foresight which is requisite for the due management of their affairs. (See Isa. xix. 11, &c.)

Ver. 8. *Flee, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan.*] The Dedanites were Arabians of the posterity of Dedan, the grandson of Abraham, (Gen. xxv. 3.) They seem by this place to have been in latter times subdued by the Idumeans, and incorporated with them: the prophet exhorts them to flee, and turn their backs from an enemy they are not able to encounter; and hide themselves in the deepest caves and dens they could find. (Compare ver. 10. and Judg. vi. 2.)

Ver. 9. *If grape-gatherers came to thee, would not they leave some grapes?* &c.] The vintage can hardly be gathered in so clean, but that there will be a gleaning left. (Compare Isa. xvii. 6.) Nay, the house-breakers commonly leave something behind them. But the desolation that is coming upon thee will be so entire, that scarce a remnant shall be preserved. (Compare Obad. ver. 5.)

Ver. 10. *For I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret parts.*] Or *treasures,* as the word signifies, Isa. xlv. 3. I have taken from him every thing that might be a refuge or defence to him in the time of a general calamity.

His seed is spoiled, his brethren, and his neighbours.] The Divine judgments extend not only to his children, but even to his brethren and neighbours: such as the Ammonites, Moabites, and all about him, from whom he might expect some succour and assistance.

And he is not.] He is utterly ruined and destroyed. (Compare Isa. xvii. 14.) Some join this word *enenna* to the following verse, and render it, *And there is none left* [that may say] *leave* [to me] *thy father's children,* &c. that is, there is none left to take care of the fatherless and widow.

Ver. 11. *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive,* &c.] The Chaldee paraphrase understands this of the Jews, to whom the following words do certainly belong; as if it contained God's promise to take care of their families, under that distressed and forlorn state, to which the captivity had reduced them. If we understand the words of the Edomites, the sentence seems to be ironical; (see a like instance, Isa. xvi. 4.) as if the prophet had said, Thou needest not to be concerned for thy helpless children, and thy widows thou must leave to the mercy of the enemy, for none of them shall survive or escape. This sense agrees very well with that expression of ver. 10. *His seed is spoiled,* and with ver. 13. 17.

Ver. 12. *Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken.*] The Jews, who in all human appearance might have expected mercy at God's hands in regard to the gracious promises made to them,

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and to their fathers. (See xxv. 29.) Concerning the phrase of *drinking God's cup*, see the note on xxv. 15.

And art thou he that shalt altogether go unpunished?] Concerning the Hebrew phrase used in this place, see the note on xxx. 11.

Ver. 13. *That Bozrah shall become—a curse.*] See the note on xxiii. 9. Bozrah was one of the chief cities of Idumea. (See Isa. xxxiv. 6. lxiii. 1.)

It is usual in the prophets to describe the destruction of a whole nation, by the ruin of some one or more of its principal cities. (See ver. 23. Amos i. 8. 12. 14. ii. 3. 5.)

Ver. 14. *I have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen,* &c.] The prophets often represent God as summoning armies, and setting them in array of battle against those people whom he has decreed to destroy. (See l. 9. 21. li. 11. Isa. xiii. 2, 3. xviii. 3.) God's stirring up men's spirits to invade such countries, is described here, as if he had sent an ambassador to the Chaldeans and their confederates, to engage them in a war against the Idumeans: according to the methods which earthly princes use to engage their allies. (Compare li. 27, 28.)

Ver. 16. *Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thy heart.*] Thou hast been formerly terrible to all about thee: the confidence thou hast in this thy strength hath made thee careless and secure, and thereby given thine enemies an advantage against thee.

O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, that holdest the height of the hill.] Compare Obad. ver. 4. Numb. xxxiv. 3, 4. St. Jerome, who lived in the neighbourhood, tells us, in his Commentary upon Obadiah, that Idumea was a rocky mountainous country, and that the inhabitants dwelt in caves dug out of the rocks and hills.

Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down.] The greatest height or strength cannot place thee out of the reach of Divine vengeance. (Compare li. 53. Amos ix. 2.) The eagle is remarkable for its flying high. (See Job xxxix. 27.)

Ver. 17. *Every one that goeth by it—shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.*] See the note on xviii. 16.

Ver. 18. *As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah,* &c.] A proverbial expression, denoting an utter desolation. (See l. 40. Isa. xiii. 19.)

Ver. 19. *Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong.*] A description of Nebuchadnezzar marching with his army against Idumea, whom the prophet compares to a lion coming out of his den, near the river Jordan. When that swells in the time of harvest (see Josh. iii. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 15.) the lions that lie in the thickets on the river-side, are raised out of their coverts, and infest the country. (See Maundrell's Travels, p. 81. and compare Zech. xi. 3.)

But I will make him suddenly run away from her.] I have observed in my notes on Isa. li. 4. that the words should be rendered *I will rouse him up, and make him run,* or *seize upon her.* The preposition *menal,* here translated *from,* doth likewise signify *upon,* and is so rendered by our interpreters, 1 Kings ix. 5. (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 635.)

And who is a chosen man [or *warrior*] *that I may appoint over her?*] That is, I will single out a man remarkable for his prowess, *viz.* Nebuchadnezzar, and place him at the head of the army, that shall execute my vengeance upon Edom.

Who will appoint me the time? or who is that shepherd that will meet me?] Who will challenge me to meet him in the field, as if we were upon equal terms? or what leader or general can enter into the lists with me? The word *shepherd* often signifies a prince or commander. (See vi. 3. xxv. 34.) But here it is used in opposition to the lion mentioned before; as if he had said, A shepherd may as well encounter a lion, as the best appointed warrior contend with God Almighty, or those whom he makes the instruments of his vengeance.

Ver. 20. *Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out.*] The prophet having given the name of *shepherd* to the generals of the army, in pursuance of that metaphor, he expresses the common soldiers by *the least of the flock,* as the commanders are called *the principal of the flock,* xxv. 34. These he saith shall have strength and courage enough to draw out or devour the Idumean forces. The verb *sahab, to draw out,* alludes to the custom of dogs, who draw about a carcass before they devour it. So it is used xv. 3. where our interpreters read, *and the dogs to tear.*

Ver. 21. *The earth is moved at the noise of their fall.*] The neighbouring countries are astonished at it. The prophet compares the destruction of a nation to the fall of a great building, the noise of which frights those that are near it. (See Ezek. xxvi. 15. xxxi. 16.) Horace uses the same metaphor, Ode i. lib. ii.

——"auditumque Medis
Hesperiæ sonitum ruinæ."——

At the cry, the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea.] Or, *the noise of their cry was heard in the Red Sea:* which was a considerable distance from the land of Edom.

Ver. 22. *He shall come up as an eagle,* &c.] See xlviii. 40, 41.

Ver. 23. *Concerning Damascus.*] The judgment denounced against Damascus, the principal city of Syria, is to be supposed to extend to the whole country. (See the note on ver. 13.) Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Syria at the beginning of his reign: (see the notes on xxxv. 1.) but he might upon some new provocations overrun that country afterward, during the siege of Tyre, which lasted thirteen years. (See the Argument to the chapter, and the notes upon xxv. 26.)

Hamath is confounded, and Arphad.] Hamath and Arphad are elsewhere joined together. (See 2 Kings xviii. 34.) Hamath is supposed to be the same with Riblah *in the land of Hamath,* xxxix. 5. called *Hamath the great,* Amos vi. 2. It is a frontier town, lying upon the borders of Judea towards Syria, thence called the *entrance of Hamath,* 1 Kings viii. 65. Isa. x. 9. Amos vi. 14. Arphad is otherwise called Arvad, the habitation of the Arvadites, Gen. x. 18. called the Aradites by the Septuagint, that is, the inhabitants of the isle of Aradus.

There is sorrow on the sea.] Or, As *on the sea,* as the margin reads: the particle *as* is frequently understood. (See xlviii. 34. and the note on Isa. xxi. 8.) *They are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,* as the prophet Isaiah speaks, lvii. 20. If we follow the reading of the text, we may interpret the words of the Aradians, who lay upon the sea-coast. (Compare xxv. 22.)

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Ver. 24. *Anguish and sorrows have taken her,* &c.] See xlviii. 41.

Ver. 25. *How is the city of praise not left,* &c.] A city of praise, is a city of fame and renown. (Compare xxxiii. 9. li. 41. Isa. lxii. 7.) This is spoken in the person of the king, or some other inhabitant of Damascus, bewailing the lot of so famous and pleasant a city, that it should not be spared or left untouched by the enemy.

Ver. 26. *Therefore her young men.*] Or, *Surely her young men,* &c. So the particle *laken* is rendered, v. 2.

Ver. 27. *It shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.*] The name of several kings of Syria. (See 1 Kings xv. 28. 2 Kings xiii. 3.)

Ver. 28. *Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor.*] The kingdoms whose metropolis is Hazor, or Petra; so called, because it is κύκλῳ πέτρα φρουρουμένη, Strabo, lib. xvi. So Vitringa explains it upon Isa. xxi. 13. Kedar was that part of Arabia, which was inhabited by the posterity of Kedar, Ishmael's son; (Gen. xxv. 13.) called likewise the kingdoms or provinces of Hazor: each division having anciently a petty prince or king over it. (See the note on xxv. 20.)

Spoil the men of the east.] The Arabians are called, in the Scripture dialect, *the men,* or *children, of the east.* (See the note on Isa. xi. 14.)

Ver. 29. *Their tents and their flocks shall they take away,* &c.] Their substance consisted in their cattle and their tents, from whence the country itself is called the *tents of Kedar,* Psal. cxx. 5. With these they removed from place to place for the convenience of pasture. (See Isa. xiii. 20.)

And they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side.] The very noise of the enemies shall fright them, and bring a panic fear upon them. (See xlvi. 5.)

Ver. 30. *Flee, get you far, dwell deep,* &c.] See ver. 8.

Ver. 31. *Arise, get you up into the wealthy nation.*] The prophet gives the Chaldeans a commission from God to undertake this expedition, and seize upon the wealth of the inhabitants of Kedar.

Which have neither bars nor gates.] A description of those that live securely, without walls or ramparts for their defence. (See Ezek. xxxviii. 11.)

Which dwell alone.] That do not combine into cities or communities for their mutual defence: but live scattered about the country, where they have room enough for their flocks, without any apprehension of danger. (Compare Numb. xxiii. 9. Deut. xxxiii. 28. Micah vii. 14.)

Ver. 32. *And their camels shall be a booty,* &c.] See ver. 29.

And I will scatter them that dwell in the utmost corners.] See the note upon ix. 26.

Ver. 33. *And I will make Hazor a dwelling for dragons.*] See the note on ix. 11.

Ver. 34. *The word—that came to Jeremiah against Elam.*] The province of Elymais, which, together with Susiana, Nebuchadnezzar subdued, and took from Astyages king of Media, as Archbishop Usher gathers, by comparing Jer. xxv. 25. with Dan. viii. 1, 2. where, in the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel speaks of himself, as residing in *Shushan the palace, in the province of Elam:* which therefore at that time must be a province belonging to the king of Babylon. (See his Annals, ad An. M. 3405. and 3451.) Xenophon gives this account of the matter, how Elam came afterward under the power of Cyrus: "That Abradates being viceroy of Susa, under the king of Babylon, his wife Panthea, a very beautiful woman, was taken prisoner in the first war against the Babylonians: Cyrus having used her kindly, and kept her chastely for her husband; the sense of this generosity drew this prince over to Cyrus's party: whereupon Elam was joined to the empire of the Medes and Persians." (Vid. Cyri Pæd. lib. v.) Accordingly, we find the Elamites come with them to the siege of Babylon. (See Isa. xxi. 2.)

Ver. 35. *I will break the bow of Elam.*] The Elamites were famous archers. (See Isa. xxii. 6.)

Ver. 36. *And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven.*] I will bring enemies upon them from every quarter: wars and commotions are metaphorically denoted by winds. (See iv. 11, 12. li. 1. Dan. vii. 2.)

Ver. 37. *And I will send the sword after them,* &c.] Even after they are driven out of their own country, my vengeance shall pursue them. (Compare x. 16.)

Ver. 38. *And I will set my throne in Elam.*] Nebuchadnezzar shall place his throne, or his royal pavilion, in Elam, in token of his entire conquest over that country. (See i. 15. xliii. 10.) This is called God's throne, as Nebuchadnezzar is called his servant: one that had an especial commission from God, to conquer this and the neighbouring countries. (See xxvii. 6, 7.)

Ver. 39. *But it shall come to pass, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam.*] The Elamites joined with Cyrus to subdue the Babylonians: (see the note upon ver. 34.) upon which Shushan, the chief city of Elymais, was made the metropolis of the Persian empire.

CHAP. L.

ARGUMENT.

This and the following chapter contain a large description of the downfal of Babylon, and of that empire of which that city was the seat: it follows the rest of the prophecies of Jeremiah against the neighbouring countries, according to the method of God's judgments laid down before, xxv. 12, 13. where the prophet declares, that after Nebuchadnezzar and his successors had fulfilled God's purposes, in being executioners of his vengeance upon other countries, they themselves should drink of the same cup.

This prophecy has a farther aspect upon the mystical Babylon, mentioned in the Revelation, and many expressions of it are applied by St. John to the downfal of antichrist, as shall be more particularly observed under the several verses there referred to.

Ver. 2. *DECLARE ye amongst the nations and publish.*] The downfal of Babylon was an event in which many nations were concerned, that empire having been a common oppressor.

Set up a standard.] To call people together, and impart to them these good tidings. The destruction of Babylon would be likewise a sort of signal to the Jews, to assemble together in order to their return home: the time of their captivity being then to expire.

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Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, &c.] When God punisheth an idolatrous nation, he asserts his own authority, to the confusion of all idols and their worshippers. (See the note on xliii. 12.) *Bel* is the same with Baal, a name common to the idols of the eastern countries, and at first probably given to some of the heavenly bodies. Afterward, when the worship of the deified men came into practice, Bel, or Belus, the idol of the Assyrians, is supposed to be the same with Nimrod: and when Daniel saith that Nebuchadnezzar carried the vessels of the temple of Jerusalem *into the house of his god,* (Dan. i. 2.) he is generally supposed to mean the idol Bel; who was worshipped as the tutelar deity of that country. Merodach might be the name of one of their kings, that was afterward deified by his subjects. (See Isa. xxxix. 1.)

Ver. 3. *For out of the north there cometh a nation against her.*] The Medes, who lay north of Babylon. (See ver. 9. 41.

Which shall make her land desolate.] See the note upon ver. 40.

Ver. 4. *In those days—the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping,* &c.] This may, in some sense, be meant of the Jews' return from the captivity, upon the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy. But I conceive this verse, among many others, is a proof that this prophecy has a farther aspect upon that general restoration of the Jews, which should be the consequent of the downfal of antichrist. For, first, here Israel and Judah are spoken of as partakers of the same restoration of the Jews, and reunited in the worship of the true God: a blessing not yet brought to pass, but reserved for aftertimes: (compare ver. 10. see the Argument upon chap. xxx. and the note upon iii. 18.) and, in the second place, they are described as weeping, and troubled with a true compunction for their former sins: another circumstance to be hereafter fulfilled. (See the note on xxxi. 9.)

Ver. 5. *They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward,* &c.] The words allude to the custom of the Jews going in companies up to Jerusalem at the solemn festivals. (Compare chap. xxxi. Isa. ii. 3.)

Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant.] The gospel is styled an *everlasting covenant,* xxxii. 40. The Hebrew phrase is the same in both places. The words may allude to that solemn covenant Josiah and the people entered into after the general corruption of religion and morality, which had overspread the nation under the reign of Manasseh. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 3.)

Ver. 6. *My people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray.*] The rulers of my people, both civil and ecclesiastical, have been the occasion of their idolatry and other sins, by which they have gone astray from God's commandments. (See the notes on ii. 8. and compare Ezek. xxxiv. 4—6.)

They have turned them away on the mountains, &c.] They have turned them aside from the right worship of God performed at Jerusalem, to sacrifice to idols upon the mountains and high places. (See ii. 20. iii. 23.)

Ver. 7. *Their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord.*] The heathen took advantage against the Jews from those remarkable judgments God had brought upon his people; and concluded from thence, that he cast them off utterly for their sins, and, being out of his protection, they might use them as they pleased. (Compare Isa. xlvii. 6. Zech. i. 15.)

The habitation of justice.] A refuge and protection for those that are good and just: and, consequently, one that would not have cast off the Jews, if they had not first forsook him. (Compare Psal. xci. 1.)

Ver. 8. *Remove out of the midst of Babylon.*] An exhortation often used by the prophets upon this subject; (see li. 6. 45. Isa. xlviii. 20. see the notes there, lii. 11.) and renewed by St. John, Rev. xviii. 4.

This exhortation Dr. Prideaux supposes to relate to the siege of Babylon, carried on by Darius Hystaspes, in the fifth and sixth years of his reign. Before which time God had warned the Jews, by their prophet Zechariah, (ii. 6, 7.) to *flee out of Babylon,* and to deliver themselves from the miseries that should befal that city during the siege. (See his Connex. of Script. Hist. p. 188.)

And be as the he-goats before the flocks.] Let every one strive to lead the way to others, and give them an example of speedily obeying God's call, without shewing any fondness to the place, or the idolatries there practised.

Ver. 9. *For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations from the north country.*] See ver. 41. li. 27.

Their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man, &c.] See ver. 14. 29. Isa. xiii. 18.

Ver. 10. *All that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord.*] They shall revenge themselves upon her, and shall have as much spoil and plunder as they can desire.

Ver. 11. *Because ye were glad—O ye destroyers of the heritage.*] Ye insulted over the miseries of my people, after you had destroyed them. Though the Chaldeans were the executors of God's judgments upon the Jews; yet he punished them for what they did by his appointment, because they were carried on purely by their own ambition and covetousness, though Providence directed their cruelties and oppressions to the fulfilling its own ends and purposes. In like manner, God threatens to punish the king of Assyria, after he had been the executioner of his judgments upon Jerusalem, Isa. x. 12. (Compare Isa. xlvii. 6.)

Because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, &c.] The insolence and rudeness of oppressors is often compared to the wantonness of full-fed cattle. (See Psal. xxii. 12. lxviii. 31. Amos iv. 1.) For *dasha,* which our translation renders *at grass,* some read *dosha,* and understand it of an heifer that treads out the corn, and by being fed all that time, grows fat and wanton. (See Hos. x. 11.)

Ver. 12. *Your mother shall be sore confounded.*] Babylon, the metropolis, or mother-city of the empire. (Compare xlix. 2.)

Behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, &c.] The Vulgar Latin renders the words to this sense, *Behold, she shall be the hindermost of the nations, a wilderness,* &c. (See ver. 40.)

Ver. 13. *Every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished,* &c.] See the note on xviii. 16.

Ver. 14. *All ye that bend the bow, shoot at her.*] The Elamites were famous for their skill in archery: which people were part of Cyrus's army. (See the note on xlix. 34, 35. see ver. 9. 29. 42.)

For she hath sinned against the Lord.] She hath been in a remarkable manner an enemy to God's truth and people.

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This may be especially applied to mystical Babylon. (See ver. 29. 31.)

Ver. 15. *Shout against her round about.*] As conquerors do when a city is taken.

She hath given her hand.] She has submitted herself, and promised obedience to the conqueror. *Giving the hand* is a token of consenting to any conditions offered; (see 2 Kings x. 15. 1 Chron. xxix. 24. 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Ezra x. 10.) and was sometimes a ceremony used in taking an oath, to fulfil what is required by a superior. (Compare Gen. xxiv. 2. Lam. v. 6. Ezek. xvii. 18.)

Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down.] See li. 58.

As she hath done, do unto her.] See ver. 29.

Ver. 16. *Cut off the sower from Babylon,* &c.] Babylon was more like a country walled in than a city: her walls being sixty miles in compass, as Herodotus testifies: forty-eight miles according to Strabo, (lib. xvi. p. 738.) Within this large circuit, a great deal of ground was taken up in corn-fields. So that they had corn sufficient growing within the walls to maintain a siege, as Q. Curtius affirms, (lib. v. cap. 1.) Whereupon the husbandmen suffered as well as others, in a general destruction of the inhabitants: which our learned Dr. Prideaux refers to the taking of Babylon by Darius Hystaspes, after a siege of twenty months. (See his Connex. of Script. Hist. p. 187, &c.) Where he applies several parts of this prophecy, relating to the utter overthrow of Babylon, to this reduction of it: for there is no necessity of supposing the destruction of Babylon here foretold should come to pass all together. The prophet only foretelling what should be the conclusion of God's judgments upon that place.

The same learned writer observes, that the punishment of Babylon kept pace with the restauration of the Jews. And as there are two ways of computing the seventy years of the Jewish captivity, one used by Jeremiah, the other by Zechariah: (see the note on xxv. 11.) so, if we reckon these seventy years ended in the fourth year of Darius, as Zechariah does, the desolation of Babylon was in a great measure completed about the same time.

For fear of the oppressing sword, they shall turn every one to his people, &c.] This is spoken of the Babylonish allies. (Compare xlvi. 15. Isa. xiii. 14.)

Ver. 17. *Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away.*] Compare ver. 6. As a lion coming among a flock of sheep scatters them one from another; so have these foreign invaders, elsewhere compared to lions, (see ii. 15. v. 6.) served my people: first Shalmaneser carried away the ten tribes, and then the king of Babylon made a final destruction of the whole nation.

Ver. 18. *I have punished the king of Assyria.*] This may most probably be understood of the destruction of Nineveh, the chief seat of the Assyrian empire, by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus, or Astyages, as it is related in Tobit, xiv. 5. At the taking of this great city, foretold by Jonah, Nahum, and Zephaniah, Chynaladanus, the last king of the Assyrian race, was killed: and the seat and title of the empire removed to Babylon, which was no longer called the Assyrian, but the Babylonian monarchy. (See Dr. Prideaux, p. 47, 48.)

Ver. 19. *And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan,* &c.] I will take care of them as a shepherd does of his flock, and restore them to their ancient habitations, and their former peace and plenty. As several parts of this prophecy relate to that mystical Babylon, whose destruction is foretold Rev. xviii. so these promises of grace and favour to the Jewish nation, are chiefly to be understood of the general restoration of the Jewish nation, which we may expect after the downfal of the antichristian empire. (Compare xxxiii. 12. Isa. lxv. 13. Ezek. xxxiv. 13, 14.)

Ver. 20. *In those days—the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.*] I will be perfectly reconciled to them, as if they had never offended. The Hebrew language expresses the utter ceasing of any thing, by *seeking and not finding it.* (See Psal. x. 15. xxxviii. 36. Isa. xli. 12.) Israel and Judah are here joined together, as ver. 4. (See the note there.)

I will pardon them whom I reserve.] In all the judgments God brings upon his people, he still promises to reserve a *remnant.* (See the note on xliv. 14. and on Isa. i. 9.) St. Paul calls it a *remnant according to the election of grace,* Rom. xi. 5. This place is chiefly to be understood of that *remnant* of the Jews, which should be converted in the latter times of the world, when the unbelievers and incorrigible shall be destroyed. (Compare li. 50. Isa. xlv. 20. Amos ix. 9, 10. see the notes upon Isa. iv. 2.)

Ver. 21. *Go up against the land of Merathaim.*] Or, of *rebels,* as the margin expounds the word. Others understand by it that part of the Babylonian dominions called *Mardi* by the heathen writers. This command is directed to Cyrus and his confederates.

And against the inhabitants of Pekod.] This was a country belonging to the Babylonian empire: (see Ezek. xxiii. 23.) it is mentioned here, because the word signifies *visitation.* This being the time when God will visit Babylon. (See ver. 27. 31. and the note upon xlviii. 2.)

Waste and utterly destroy them.] Or, *Destroy their posterity.* Cut off from Babylon *the name and remnant,* as God threatens in the parallel prophecy, Isa. xiv. 22. The word *ahar* signifies the same with *aharith,* which commonly denotes posterity. (See Dan. xi. 4.)

Do according to all that I have commanded thee.] Those persons whom God raises up to fulfil the decrees of his providence are said to perform his commands; (see xxxiv. 22. Isa. x. 6.) and therefore are called his *servants.* (See xxv. 9. xxvii. 6.) Such a commission was, in a particular manner, given to Cyrus by the prophet Isaiah, xliv. 28. xlv. 11. xlviii. 14.

Ver. 23. *How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!*] That oppressive empire which *smote the nations with a continual stroke,* as it is described, Isa. xiv. 6.

Ver. 24. *I have laid a snare for thee; and thou art also taken, O Babylon.*] Cyrus took the city by surprise, and unexpected, by draining the river Euphrates. (See ver. 38. compare li. 8.)

Ver. 25. *The Lord hath opened his armoury,* &c.] He hath raised up enemies to subdue the Chaldeans, Cyrus and his confederates: and hath furnished them with all necessary provisions for such an undertaking.

Ver. 26. *Come against her from the utmost border.*] From distant parts, *from the ends of the earth,* as it is expressed

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ver. 40. Some render it, *from all parts*, or from every quarter, as the word *miktse* is rendered, Gen. xix. 4.

Cast her up as heaps.] The word *naremim* properly signifies *heaps of corn;* taking it in this sense, the marginal reading is to be preferred, *Tread her as heaps;* that is, as the corn is trodden down when it is thrashed. The phrase alludes to the way of thrashing used in the eastern parts of the world, which was to beat the wheat out of the husk, by drawing heavy drays or planks over it. (See the note upon Isa. xxviii. 28.)

Destroy her utterly, &c.] See ver 40.

Ver. 27. *The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon*, &c.] Some of those that were more than ordinary zealous for the welfare of God's church and people, were ready upon the first news of the taking of Babylon to bring the glad tidings thereof into Judea, how God had avenged the cause of his people, and executed his judgments on those who destroyed his temple, and profaned the holy vessels of it that were dedicated to his service. (See Dan v. 1—3. 5. 30. and compare li. 51.)

[Ver. 29. *Call together the archers against Babylon.*] This is chiefly meant of the Elamites, who were famous archers, and were part of Cyrus's army which he brought against Babylon. See xlix. 3, 4. 35. and the note there, compared with Isa. xxi. 2.]

Recompense her according to her works.] Which will be *a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*, as St. Paul speaks, 2 Thess. i. 5. at which all good men ought to rejoice, to express their approbation of it, and give glory to God when they see it done. (Compare Rev. xviii. 6. Psal. xxviii. 4. lviii. 9, 10.)

For she hath been proud against the Lord.] See ver. 14. 31.

Ver. 30. *Therefore shall her young men be cut off in the streets.*] Xenophon relates, (lib. vii.) that Gadatas and Gobryas, with their soldiers, when they were got into the town, marched directly towards the palace, and killing all they met, became masters of the place, and slew the king himself.

Ver. 31. *Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud.*] Who hast been *proud against the Lord*, (ver. 29.) and exalted thyself against God, saying, *I am; and there is none besides me.* (See Isa. xlvii. 7, 8. and the notes upon that place.)

[Ver. 32. *I will kindle a fire in his cities.*] This may be meant of the destructions made in the Babylonian territories in the several expeditions Cyrus undertook against that monarchy, during the space of twenty years before the taking of Babylon. See Dr. Prideaux, from the year before Christ 559, to the year 539.]

Ver. 33. *The children of Israel, and the children of Judah were oppressed together.*] It was the same government that oppressed them both, though under different denominations: sometimes called the kingdom of Assyria, and afterward the kingdom of Babylon: the latter succeeded the former in its oppression, as well as in its empire.

Ver. 34. *Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name.*] God will thoroughly plead the cause of his injured truth and people. (See the note on ver. 11.) This will be more remarkably fulfilled in the destruction of mystical Babylon. (Compare Isa. xlvii. 4. Rev. xviii. 8.)

Ver. 35. *A sword is upon her princes.*] Who were slain, together with their king Belshazzar, at a feast. (See li. 39. Dan. v. 2. 30.)

A sword is upon her wise men.] The Chaldeans were famous for their skill in astrology and other arts of divination: and yet the learned in these sciences were not able to foresee or prevent the dangers coming upon themselves in the common calamity. (See Isa. xlvii. 13, 14.)

Ver. 36. *A sword is upon the liars, and they shall dote.*] The false pretenders to the knowledge of what is to come. Compare xlviii. 30. Isa. xliv. 25. where the prophet, speaking of the Chaldeans, saith, *He frustrateth the tokens of the liars* [*baddim* in the Hebrew is the same word that is used here], *and maketh diviners mad.*

Ibid. and Ver. 37. *A sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. A sword is upon her horses*, &c.] See the notes on li. 30.

Ver. 37. *A sword is upon her mingled people, that are in the midst of her.*] Her auxiliaries, made up of several nations. (See Ezek. xxx. 5.)

And they shall be as women.] See the note on xlviii. 41.

A sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed.] They shall be a prey to such as come with sword in hand to rifle them: as Solon said to Crœsus, who by way of ostentation shewed him his treasures, "Sir, if any one come that has better iron than you, he will be master of all your gold." (Compare Isa. xlv. 3. and see the note there.)

Ver. 38. *A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up.*] God opened a way for Cyrus to take Babylon, by suggesting to him a method of draining the river Euphrates, and making it passable for his army. (Compare li. 36. Isa. xliv. 27.)

For it is the land of graven images, &c.] This vengeance comes upon them, because they have been the great encouragers and supporters of idolatry. (See ver. 2. li. 44. 47. 52.) And the executioners of the Divine judgments were the Persians, who, in opposition to the Sabeans, whose notions the Chaldeans embraced, followed the ancient discipline of the magi, or wise men among them, and had neither altars nor images: as Strabo testifies, lib. xv. The same thing is affirmed by Herodotus also, whose words are quoted in Origen's seventh book against Celsus, p. 373. (See likewise Dr. Prideaux's Connex. of Script. Hist. p. 177, &c.)

And they are mad upon their idols.] It looks as if men had lost the use of their reason, that they should place the whole of their religion in image-worship, and put an extraordinary value upon one image more than another. So as to deck them with the most costly ornaments, and make long pilgrimages and processions to them. For which reason idolatry is called in Scripture by the name of *sorcery* and *witchcraft*.

Ver. 39. *Therefore the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell there*, &c.] The desolation of Babylon is expressed in much the same words, Isa. xiii. 21. compare xxxiv. 11. 15. of the same prophecy, and Rev. xviii. 2.

St. Jerome assures us, in his commentary upon the parallel text of Isaiah, that, in his time, the place where Babylon stood was turned into a park, where the king of Persia used to hunt.

Ver. 40. *As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah*, &c.] See Isa. xiii. 19. xlvii. 5. and the notes there. Upon the

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Persians removing the seat of empire from Babylon, the glory of it was much diminished. And when Alexander proposed to restore it to its ancient greatness, he was prevented by death, before he could make any progress in that work. Under his successors it still decayed more and more, first by the neighbourhood of Seleucia, built upon the Tigris, by Seleucus Nicator: afterward by the building of Ctesiphon, on the other side of that river: so that at last it was reduced to utter solitude, and continued so in Strabo (lib. xvi.) and Pliny's time. (See his Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 26.)

Ver. 41. *Behold, a people shall come from the north.*] See ver. 9.

And many kings shall be raised from the coasts of the earth.] See ver. 26. i. 15. li. 27.

Ver. 42. *They shall lay hold on bow and spear.*] See vi. 23. (Compare ver. 9. 14. of this chapter.)

They are cruel and will shew no mercy.] See Isa. xiii. 17, 18.

It is a common observation, that in those extraordinary commendations Xenophon gives of Cyrus's clemency and other virtues, he rather wrote an exact character of a perfect prince, than a narrative of matter of fact. However, in the taking of cities, several outrages are usually committed contrary to the will and intent of the chief commanders.

Their voice shall roar like the sea.] The noise of an army is fitly compared to the roaring of the sea, when it rages and is tempestuous. (See Isa. v. 30.)

Ver. 43. *The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands are waxed feeble.*] Belshazzar was of himself a weak and dissolute prince, and dismayed upon the first apprehension of danger, (see Dan. v. 6.) when he understood that Cyrus's army laid siege to the city.

Ver. 44—46. *Behold, he shall come up like a lion.*] See xlix. 19—21.

And the cry is heard among the nations.] Who shall be astonished at the unexpected downfal of so great a city and potent an empire. (Compare Rev. xviii. 9.)

CHAP. LI.

See the Argument of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 1. *I WILL raise up against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me.*] Or, *them that dwell in the midst of mine enemies;* that is, them that dwell in the metropolis or chief city of the Chaldeans.

A destroying wind.] See iv. 11.

Ver. 2. *And I will send unto Babylon fanners that shall fan her.*] He persists in the metaphor of the foregoing verse: as the wind drives and scatters chaff in a thrashing-floor, so shall the Persian armies make a perfect riddance of every thing that is valuable. (Compare xv. 7.)

Ver. 3. *Against him that bendeth, let the archer bend his bow,* &c.] See l. 14.

Ver. 5. *For Israel has not been* [or shall not be] *forsaken, nor Judah of his God.*] Though God was justly displeased with his people, yet he will not cast them off utterly, or deprive them of his protection.

Ver. 6. *Flee out of the midst of Babylon, deliver every man his soul,* &c.] God's people are exhorted to flee out of Babylon with all haste, as Lot did out of Sodom, lest they be consumed in the iniquity of that place. (See l. 8.)

Ver. 7. *Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that hath made all the earth drunken.*] She has recommended her idolatries to the world by several specious pretences, as well as by her authority and example. So that they have been like poison set off by a golden cup, which hath enticed men to drink without being aware of the danger; and all this by God's permission, in order to the accomplishing some great ends of his providence. The expressions allude to the practice of harlots, in giving love-potions to their gallants, which were made up of such ingredients as disturbed their brains, and made them run mad. The sense of this verse is plainly applied by St. John to *spiritual* Babylon, which has used the most plausible methods to disguise her idolatrous practices. (See Rev. xiv. 8. xvii. 4.)

Ver. 8. *Babylon is suddenly fallen.*] It is one aggravation of the punishment of Babylon, that her destruction should come upon her suddenly and unexpectedly; (compare l. 24.) *in one day,* as the prophet Isaiah expresses it, xlvii. 9. (See the note upon that place, and compare Rev. xviii. 8. 10. 17. 19.)

Howl for her.] Compare xlviii. 20. So the kings, the merchants, and other factors, are described as lamenting the destruction of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 9. 11. 17.

Take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed, &c.] This is spoken ironically, implying that her ruin is irrecoverable. (See the note on xlvii. 11.)

Ver. 9. *We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed,* &c.] This is spoken in the name of God's prophets, and the other witnesses of his truth, importing that they had sufficiently testified against her errors and idolatries, but she was irreclaimable: and therefore it was time for all the lovers of truth to depart out of her, lest they be involved in her punishments. (See ver. 6.)

[*Her judgment reacheth unto heaven.*] As sin is sometimes used for the punishment due to sin, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect: so here judgment is taken for sin which brings down God's judgments, by a metonymy of the effect for the cause.]

Ver. 10. *The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness,* &c.] He hath declared our cause to be just, (compare Psal. xxxvii. 6.) by bringing such remarkable judgments upon our enemies: and therefore we ought to give glory to him in the assemblies of his church, and in the most public manner imaginable.

Ver. 11. *Make bright the arrows, gather the shields.*] Prepare the instruments of war. (See xlvi. 6.)

The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the king of the Medes.] [Neriglissorus king of Babylon having formed an alliance against the Medes, Cambyses sent his son Cyrus with an army of thirty thousand Persians to join the Medes commanded by Cyaxares. See Xenophon Cyropæd. lib. i.] This Cyaxares king of Media, called *Darius the Mede* in Scripture, was Cyrus's uncle; and it was properly his army that made the expedition against the Babylonians, he employing Cyrus as his general. Persia was then a small part of the empire of Media, and was of little account till Cyrus made a figure in the world: and even then it was called the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, the Medes having still the preference. And, in aftertimes, the Greek

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historians style those wars in which their country encountered with Xerxes, by the name of the Median wars, Τὰ Μηδικὰ, because the Medes were the founders of that empire.

Because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple.] See l. 28.

Ver. 12. *Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon,* &c.] Give a signal to the inhabitants of Babylon, to come together speedily for the defence of their walls and ramparts. To this sense some understood those words of Isaiah, (xiii. 2.) *Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountains,* meaning Babylon, called so in the twenty-fifth verse of this chapter. (See the note there.) In these and the following words, the prophet ironically encourages the Babylonians to use their best skill and courage for the defence of their city: which yet he foresees will be to no purpose. (See the like figure, ver. 8. and xlvi. 4.)

For the Lord hath devised, and done that which he spake, &c.] Or, *For as the Lord hath devised, so hath he done:* and thus the particle *gam,* being repeated, is translated ver. 29. of this chapter.

Ver. 13. *O thou that dwellest upon many waters.*] Upon the river Euphrates, which encompassed Babylon, and ran through it, and by means of which it thought itself secure and impregnable. *Many waters* do likewise mystically signify the many people over which this was the reigning city. (See Rev. xvii. 15.)

And the measure of thy covetousness.] God has put a bound to thy covetousness, which it shall not go beyond.

Ver. 14. *I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillars.*] Or, *locusts,* as Bochart saith the word properly signifies. Armies are often compared to caterpillars, locusts, and such-like devouring insects. (See Nahum iii. 15, 16. Joel ii. 2, 3, &c.)

Ver. 17—19. *He hath made the earth by his power,* &c.] An elegant and lofty description of God Almighty's power and wisdom, in opposition to the weakness and unprofitableness of idols: the same which we had before, x. 12. where see the notes. This is a powerful argument to encourage our trust in God, and to assure us, that he will in due time assert his own authority against all the encroachments of idol-worship and false religions.

Ver. 20. *Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war,* &c.] God speaks here to Cyrus, and tells him, that he will make use of him as an instrument of Providence, for the destroying of the whole power of the Babylonian empire, and of all orders and degrees of men in it; as he had formerly made that empire the executioner of his judgments upon other countries: (see l. 23.) or else the words may be understood of the church, and imply, that God will destroy all those earthly powers and kingdoms, which are adversaries to God's truth and people, in order to establish and advance his church. This will be fulfilled at the fall of mystical Babylon, when God's kingdom shall *break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth,* in the destruction of that remnant of the fourth monarchy, according to Daniel's prophecy, ii. 44. (Compare Obad. ver. 18. Micah v. 10, &c. Hag. ii. 21—23. Zech. xii. 3. 6. and see below the note on ver. 24.)

Ver. 24. *And I will render unto Babylon—all the evil that I have done to Zion.*] See ver. 11. and l. 28.

In your sight.] This expression confirms the latter interpretation given of ver. 20. the same persons being spoken of here in the plural number, which are there mentioned in the singular, that is, God's church or faithful servants. The enallage or change of numbers is frequent in Scripture, (see Psal. xii. 7.) and indeed in all writers when they speak of collective bodies.

Ver. 25. *Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain—that destroyest the whole earth.*] Or, as the words may be more fitly rendered, *O corrupting mountain, that corruptest the whole earth.* Babylon was situate in a plain, (see ver. 13. and Gen. xi. 2.) but is called a mountain here, by reason of its lofty edifices, walls, and towers. (Compare Isa. xiii. 2. Zech. iv. 7.) It is called here the *mountain of corruption,* a name given by way of reproach to the Mount of Olives, after it was defiled by idolatry, (2 Kings xxiii. 13.) by a slight changing of the Hebrew name, *Har Miscah,* into *Har Maschith.* The same appellation is here given to Babylon, because it was the seat of idolatry; from whence it was derived into other countries under its government and jurisdiction. Which is remarkably true of mystical Babylon. (See Rev. xvii. 5.)

I will—roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain.] I will dismantle all thy walls and forts, and then destroy thee with fire; (compare ver. 58, 59.) that thou shalt appear like a great mountain covered with fire and smoke. (Compare Rev. viii. 8.) We do not find that Babylon itself was ever destroyed by fire, but that mystical Babylon shall be so destroyed is plain from Rev. xvii. 16. xviii. 8, 9.

Ver. 26. *And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner,* &c.] There shall not be left an entire stone fit to use. (See l. 40.)

Ver. 27. *Set ye up a standard in the land, blow ye the trumpet among the nations.*] These were common signals for assembling armies together. (See Isa. xiii. 2. xviii. 3.)

Call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz.] These were countries under the dominion of the Medes. The two former are probably the same with the greater and lesser Armenia. Cyrus's first expedition in this war, was for reducing the Armenians, who had revolted from the government of the Medes, who upon this conquest were obliged to send their usual quota of auxiliaries to the carrying on the war against the Babylonians. (See Xenophon, Cyropæd. lib. iii.) Ararat is a place noted for the resting of the ark after the deluge, which is commonly supposed to be the same with the Gordiæan mountains: Minni is the country called Mynias, by Nic. Damascenus, in Josephus, (lib. i. cap. 4.) and Mylias by Strabo and Pliny: and is described by Damascenus as situate under the mountain Baris: that word signifies a ship in the Persian language, and was a name given to Mount Ararat, from the ark's resting there. (See Huetius's Demonstr. Evangel. prop. iv. cap. 2. n. 40.) By Ashchenaz, Bochart understands Phrygia and Troas, where there were footsteps of the name remaining in aftertimes; part of that country being called Ascania by Homer, and a lake and haven of the same name is mentioned by Strabo and Pliny. And since Cyrus had conquered Crœsus, and subdued several nations, from the Ægean Sea to Euphrates, before he marched against Babylon, as both Herodotus (lib. i.) and Xenophon (Cyropæd. lib. vii.) testify, it is very probable that a great part of his army might consist of such troops

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as followed him out of Asia. [Xenophon informs us, that there were both Phrygians and Cappadocians in Cyrus's army. Cyropæd. lib. 7. p. 188, 189. edit. Leunclav.]

Appoint a captain against her.] Compare l. 44. The word *tiphsar*, captain, is supposed by Grotius to be derived from the Persian word *satrapas;* the letters being transposed.

Cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars.] Or, *the rough locust*, as Bochart renders it, who observes that there are some insects of that kind rough and hairy, (Hierozoicon, p. 456.) Locusts represent horses, not only in their swiftness, but likewise in the shape of their heads: the figure of which may be seen in Ludolphus's note on his Ethiopic History, p. 177. (Compare Rev. ix. 7, 8.) [The war-horse may be compared to caterpillars, because their backs were bristled with sheaves of arrows.]

Ver. 28. *Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes.*] The several princes or viceroys of the provinces belonging to the Median empire with their people. (Compare l. 41.) All princes and governors are called kings in the Hebrew language. (See Isa. x. 8. and the note on xxv. 10.)

Ver. 29. *The land shall tremble and sorrow.*] An expression commonly used to denote the confusion of the inhabitants under some great calamity. (See viii. 16. x. 10. Joel ii. 10. Amos viii. 8.)

For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed—to make the land of Babylon a desolation, &c.] See the notes on l. 16. 39, 40.

Ver. 30. *The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might hath failed.*] The year before the siege of Babylon, Cyrus overthrew Belshazzar in battle, whereupon his army retreated within the walls, where they were shut up by him and besieged. Afterward, when Cyrus entered the city, he ordered public proclamation to be made, that all persons should keep within their houses, and whoever was found abroad should be put to death: and threatened to set their houses on fire, if any offered to hurt the soldiers from the tops of their houses. (See Xenophon Cyropæd. lib. vii. p. 171. 192.)

They became as women.] See the note on xlviii. 41.

They have burnt her dwelling-places.] See ver. 25.

Her bars are broken.] All her fortresses, and what she confided in as her chief defence against the enemy. (Compare Lam. ii. 9. Amos i. 5. Nahum iii. 13.)

Ver. 31. *One post shall run to meet another*, &c.] Babylon was taken by surprise, by unexpectedly draining the river Euphrates, and entering through the channel into the city, as Herodotus, (lib. i.) and Xenophon, (lib. vii. Cyropæd.) relate.

For the carrying on this stratagem, Cyrus took the opportunity of a public festival, when the whole night was usually spent in revellings, and all manner of disorders. (See ver. 39.) In this time of riot, the gates leading down to the river, that used to be shut every night, were left open, and gave a passage to Cyrus and his army into the city: which he became master of, while they thought themselves in the utmost security, both from the height and strength of their walls, and depth of the river: Cyrus having as yet made little progress in the siege, though he had invested the city with his army two years before. This surprise caused so many messengers to run one after the other, to acquaint the king with this unexpected news. The vast compass of this city has been observed in the notes on l. 16.

Herodotus takes notice, that the extreme parts of the city were taken before they who dwelt in the middle of it were sensible of the danger. (Lib. i. n. 191.)

Aristotle mentions it as a common report, that one part of the city had been taken three days before the other end knew it, (Politic. lib. iii. cap. 3.) which may probably be understood of this surprise by Cyrus.

Ver. 32. *And that the passages are stopped.*] Or rather *surprised.* (See ver. 41. of this chapter.) Cyrus's forces made themselves masters of the gates and passages that led from the river to the city.

The reeds they have burnt with fire.] The word *agammim*, translated *reeds*, properly signifies marshes or lakes: and the phrase here imports, that the enemies have burnt up all the outworks belonging to the marshy grounds about the river Euphrates.

Ver. 33. *The daughter of Babylon is like a thrashing-floor.*] God's people have been sorely bruised by the Babylonians, and trodden under foot by them as corn in a floor. (See the notes on Isa. xxi. 9.)

It is time to thrash her.] It is time for her to feel the same miseries she has made others suffer. (See l. 15. 29.) The word *thrash* often signifies to subdue by force and power. (See Isa. xli. 15. Hos. i. 3. Micah iv. 13. Habak. iii. 12.)

Yet a little while, and the times of her harvest shall come.] There shall be a clear riddance made of her inhabitants and their treasures, as the harvest clears the fields, and leaves them empty and bare. (See Isa. xvii. 5. Hos. vi. 11.)

Ver. 34. *Nebuchadnezzar—hath devoured me*, &c.] A pathetical description of the calamities brought upon the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar and his forces, who, after they had devoured the wealth, and laid waste the beauty of their country, then turned them out of it, and led them captives into a strange land.

Ver. 35. *The violence done to me and my flesh, be upon Babylon*, &c.] Let God return upon herself the violence she has done to me and to my children. (See the note on l. 29.) Our nearest relations are called *our flesh* in Scripture. (See Judg. ix. 5. 2 Sam. v. 1. Nehem. v. 5.) To this sense the Hebrew word *shear*, which signifies remainder, or posterity, is used, Lev. xviii. 12. 17. xxi. 2. xxv. 49.

Ver. 36. *Behold, I will plead my cause.*] See the note on l. 11. 34.

And I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.] I will exhaust her multitudes and their wealth. (See ver. 13. compare Isa. xix. 5.) This was likewise literally fulfilled in Cyrus's draining the river, and thereby gaining an entrance into the city. All great waters are called *seas* in the Hebrew language.

Ver. 37. *And Babylon shall become heaps*, &c.] See i. 39, 40.

Ver. 38. *They shall roar together like lions.*] Either for grief and anguish of mind; (compare Isa. lix. 11. Zech. xi. 3.) or else the prophet describes the revels and riotous noise that they made upon the night of that public festival, on which the city was taken. (See the following verse.)

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Ver. 39. *In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken.*] While they are feasting themselves, I will provide them another cup to drink; *viz.* that of my fury and indignation. (See the note on xxv. 15.) Babylon was taken upon a night of a public festival, as hath been observed upon ver. 31.

That they may rejoice and sleep a perpetual sleep, &c.] That in the midst of their jollity and security they may sleep the sleep of death: not such a sleep as proceeds from wine, which refresheth and enliveneth.

Ver. 40. *I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,* &c.] I will cut off both great and small. (See the note on l. 27. and compare Isa. xxxiv. 6.)

Ver. 41. *How is Sheshach taken?*] Some commentators suppose Babylon called here by the name of *Sheshach*, because the city was taken at the time of the festival called *Sacchæa*. (See the note on xxv. 26.)

How is the praise of the whole earth surprised!] Compare xlix. 25. Isa. xiii. 19. Dan. iv. 30. Babylon was esteemed the wonder of the world, for the height, breadth, and compass of her walls, and the palace and hanging gardens belonging to it, for the temple of Belus, for the banks and facing of the river, and the artificial lakes and canals made for the draining of it.

Ver. 42. *The sea is come up upon Babylon,* &c.] Multitudes are resembled to waters (see ver. 13. of this chapter), especially an army is fitly represented by an inundation which carries all before it. (See Psal. xviii. 16. cxliv. 7. Isa. viii. 7. Dan. ix. 26.) There is likewise an opposition elegantly implied in the words between the inundation of Cyrus's army, and the draining the river Euphrates, which was one of the chief defences of the city. The words may be taken in a more literal sense. (See the note on ver. 64.)

Ver. 43. *Her cities are a desolation,* &c.] When the seat of the empire was removed from Babylon to Shushan, the consequence of that translation was the decay of Babylon itself, and all the lesser cities within its territories: (see likewise the notes upon l. 39, 40.) or else the words may be understood of the cities belonging to the Babylonish empire, which Cyrus took in his expedition from Asia to Babylon.

Ver. 44. *And I will punish Bel and Babylon.*] See ver. 47. and the note on l. 2.

I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up.] The heathens ascribed the honour of all their successes to their idols, and upon any great victory offered the best part of the spoils to their gods, and deposited them in their temples, as a grateful acknowledgment that the success was owing to their assistance. So Nebuchadnezzar, upon every victory over the Jews, carried away part of the furniture of the sanctuary, and put it in the temple of his idol. (See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. Dan. i. 3. 2 Kings xxv. 13, &c.) The restoring of the holy vessels to their right owner, and their former use, is what is here particularly foretold; which was done by Cyrus upon his proclamation for rebuilding the temple, Ezra i. 7. (Compare ver. 11. 31. of this chapter, and l. 28.)

The farther accomplishment of this prophecy, Dr. Prideaux places in Xerxes's demolishing the temple of Belus, and plundering it of its vast wealth; which, from Diodorus Siculus's account of it, he computes to amount to twenty-one millions of our money. (See his Connect. of Script. Hist. p. 100, 101.)

[The words may be explained from the apocryphal history of Bel and the Dragon, where the idol is supposed to have been daily fed with the choicest provisions, which his priests pretended were devoured by him: ver. 6. 11, &c. Here the prophet saith, there shall be no more such provisions made for him, and the idol itself shall be broken in pieces, to make him restore, if it were possible, what he has consumed.]

And the nations shall not any more flow unto him.] There shall be no more costly presents brought by foreign nations unto the temple of Bel, as a compliment to that monarchy: just as, under the Roman empire, people that were conquered by them, sent golden crowns to Jupiter Capitolinus.

Yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.] See ver. 58.

Ver. 45. *My people, go ye out of the midst of her,* &c.] See the note on l. 8.

Ver. 46. *And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be in the land.*] Lest the rumours of new forces ready to join themselves to the Babylonians, dishearten you, and make you despair of seeing so great an empire subdued by any human power.

A rumour shall both come one year, and after that a rumour shall come another year.] The prophet gives these tokens, whereby they may know the time of the dissolution of that empire drawing near; *viz.* that the first rumour of war denounced against the head of that empire shall be the year before the siege, when Cyrus and Nabonnidus (or Belshazzar) shall engage in a battle; and the latter shall be overcome, upon which defeat the conqueror should in the following year lay siege to the city itself. (See Archbishop Usher, ad An. M. 3464.)

Violence in the land, ruler against ruler.] This should be a time of hostile depredations and invasions: Cyrus and the king of Babylon should now appear at the head of two contending armies.

Ver. 47. *I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon.*] See l. 2.

Dr. Prideaux supposes this prophecy fulfilled, when Xerxes pillaged and destroyed the Babylonish temples. (See his Connect. of Script. Hist. p. 242.) Taking this prophecy in its full extent, it comprises the fall of mystical Babylon, which is represented here, and in the parallel places of Isaiah and the Revelation, as a decisive stroke, which should thoroughly vindicate the cause of oppressed truth and innocence, and put a final period to idolatry, and to all the oppressions of God's people.

And all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.] See l. 35, 36.

Ver. 48. *Then the heavens and the earth and all that are therein shall sing for Babylon.*] God's mercy to his church, and his judgments upon idolaters, shall be matter of joy and thankfulness to all God's faithful servants. (Compare ver. 10. and l. 28, 29. Isa. xliv. 23. xlviii. 20. Rev. xviii. 20.)

For the spoilers shall come to her from the north.] See l. 3. 40.

Ver. 49. *As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall,* &c.] God will reward her according to her works. (See l. 29.)

Ver. 50. *Ye that are escaped the sword.*] The verse may,

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in the first place, relate to those Jews who had undergone all the hardships and dangers that attended a long captivity in an enemy's country: but I conceive it is to be understood of those who are elsewhere called *the remnant.* (See the note on l. 20.) These are exhorted to flee as fast as they can to Babylon, and join themselves in heart and mind with God's church and people.

Ver. 51. *We are confounded, because we have heard reproaches,* &c.] The prophet represents the words of these pious exiles, when they reflected upon the desolation of God's people and sanctuary, whereby they were not only exposed themselves to the scorn and reproach of their enemies, but God's name and truth were blasphemed by strangers and heathens, who profaned his sanctuary, as if he were not able to protect his temple and worshippers. (Compare Psal. xliv. 15, 16. lxxix. 4. Lam. ii. 15, 16.)

Into the sanctuaries of the Lord.] The word *sanctuaries,* in the plural, is likewise used Psal. lxxiii. 17. though our English reads there *sanctuary;* and the word is either an allusion to the several courts of the temple, or else it may comprehend those private oratories, which religious persons built for performing their devotions, who lived at a distance from the temple. (See Psal. lxxiv. 8. and the notes upon xli. 5.)

Ver. 52. *Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* &c.] See ver. 47.

Ver. 53. *Though Babylon should mount up to heaven,* &c.] Though she prides herself in the glory of her empire, placed above the common height of human greatness; (compare Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.) though she thinks herself never so secure in her high gates, (ver. 58.) and strength of her walls, which were three hundred and fifty feet high, according to Herodotus; (lib. i. cap. 178.) yet this shall not place her out of the reach of my vengeance. (Compare xlix. 16.)

Ver. 55. *Because the Lord—hath destroyed out of her, the great voice when the waves do roar,* &c.] As multitudes are compared to waters, (see ver. 13.) so the noise and stirs that are heard in populous cities are resembled to the waves of the sea; (compare Isa. xxii. 2.) and when they are depopulated, they are reduced to silence. (See Isa. xv. 1. lvii. 5.) The same is expressed, xxv. 10. by *taking away the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness,* &c. A judgment threatened to mystical Babylon, Rev. xviii. 23. Some render the latter part of the verse thus, *When their waves roar,* &c. and explain it of the Medes and Persians coming up like a flood against Babylon. (See ver. 42.)

Ver. 56. *Her mighty men are taken,* &c.] See the notes upon ver. 30.

For the Lord God of recompences shall surely requite.] See l. 29.

Ver. 57. *And I will make drunk her princes and her wise men,* &c.] See ver. 39. and l. 35.

Ver. 58. *The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burnt with fire.*] The walls were eighty-seven feet in breadth, according to Herodotus, (lib. i. cap. 178.) Ctesias saith, they were so wide, that six chariots might meet upon them; (apud Diodor. Sicul. lib. ii.) their height was three hundred and fifty feet, as was observed before: on each square of the walls were twenty-five gates of brass, mentioned Isa. xlv. 2. These were taken away by Darius, when he took the city, (see the notes upon l. 16.) who likewise brought down their walls to the height of fifty cubits only. Berosus affirms, that Cyrus ordered the outward walls of the city to be pulled down: (see his words in Josephus, lib. i. contra App. p. 1045.) though Herodotus and Xenophon take no notice of this circumstance.

And the people shall labour in vain, and the folks in the fire, and they shall be weary.] If the Chaldeans take never so much pains to quench the fire, it shall be to no purpose. (Compare ver. 64.) And all their efforts to preserve their empire and city shall be as insignificant, as if men wrought in the fire, which immediately destroys all the fruits of their labours. The words may be better translated, *And the people shall labour for a thing of nought, and the folks shall weary themselves for that which shall be fuel for the fire:* that is, the works which have been erected with such incredible labour and expense shall at last fall to ruin, and be a prey to the flames. (Compare ver. 25. Habak. ii. 13. and see Noldius's Concordance, p. 185.)

Ver. 59. *When he went with Zedekiah king of Judah.*] Or rather, *from Zedekiah,* or, *on the behalf of Zedekiah,* as our margin reads. (See Noldius's Concordance, p. 114.)

And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.] *The chief chamberlain,* as the margin reads, with a better sense: the chief of those that waited upon the king in his bedchamber.

Ver. 60. *So Jeremiah wrote in a book,* &c.] Compare xxx. 2. He might perhaps make use of Baruch as his amanuensis. (See xxxvi. 2. 4.)

Ver. 61. *And shalt see, and shalt read all these words.*] He was enjoined to read this prophecy to the Jews that were carried away to Babylon in Jehoiakim's captivity: (see xxix. 1, 2.) to comfort them under their exile.

Ver. 63. *Thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the river Euphrates,* &c.] The prophets sometimes gave sensible representations of the judgments they foretold. (See xix. 10.) This was a significant emblem of Babylon's sinking irrecoverably under the judgments here denounced against her. (Compare Rev. xviii. 21.) This threatening was in a literal sense fulfilled, by Cyrus's breaking down the head or dam of the great lake, that was on the west side of the city, in order to turn the course of the river that way: for no care being afterward taken to repair that breach, the whole country about it was overflown and drowned: and that prophecy of Isaiah, (xiv. 23.) of making the country of Babylon *a possession for the bittern and pools of water,* was literally fulfilled. (See Dr. Prideaux, p. 104. 123, 124.)

Ver. 64. *And they shall be weary.*] They shall be like men that strive against an enemy that is too hard for them, where all their labour is but in vain. (See ver. 58.)

Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.] This is added, to shew, that the next chapter was added by Ezra or Baruch, or whoever collected this prophecy into one volume.

CHAP. LII.

ARGUMENT.

Grotius judiciously observes, that this chapter could not be added by Jeremiah, because a great part of it is a repetition of what he himself had related in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of his prophecy. Therefore it is much more probable, that this chapter was added by

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Ezra, who is commonly supposed to have collected the holy writings into one body after the captivity. Who designed this brief history of the desolations of the Jewish nation, as an introduction to the book of Lamentations that follows, and was anciently joined to the prophecy of Jeremiah, as appears from St. Jerome's epistle to Paulinus. This chapter is chiefly taken out of the latter part of the second book of Kings, with some few additions, which Ezra might supply out of the public records, from whence the books of Kings were compiled: which books were written either in or after the captivity, as may be collected from the Chaldee names, which are given to the months in those books, which were never used by the Jews till after the captivity.

Ver. 1—3. THIS is word for word the same with 2 Kings xxiv. 18—20.

Ver. 4—11. *And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign,* &c.] See xxxix. 1, &c.

Ver. 11. *And put him in prison till the day of his death.*] See the note on xxxix. 7.

Ver. 12. *Now in the fifth month.*] This gave occasion to that solemn fast of the fifth month, observed in the times of the captivity. (See Zech. vii. 3. 5. viii. 19.)

On the tenth day of the month.] It is said 2 Kings xxv. 7. that Nebuzar-adan came to Jerusalem on the seventh day of the month, but did not set the city and temple on fire till the tenth. Josephus, de Bello Jud. lib. viii. cap. 27. relates this remarkable circumstance that attended the burning of the temple, both under Nebuchadnezzar and Vespasian, that it happened both times on the same day of the year.

Ver. 13. *And burnt the house of the Lord.*] After it had stood, saith Josephus, four hundred and seventy years, (Antiq. lib. x. cap. 11.) Archbishop Usher reckons it four hundred and twenty-four years from the laying the first foundation, by Solomon.

Ver. 15. See the note on xxxix. 9.

Ver. 17, 18. *Also the pillars of brass,* &c.] See 2 Kings xxv. 14, &c. The temple was rifled of its riches and furniture at several times: the first was when Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jehoiakim, Dan. i. 2. the second time was at the captivity of Jeconiah; (see xxvii. 19. and 2 Kings xxiv. 13.) and now, at the final destruction of the city and temple, they made a clear riddance of all its ornaments.

Ver. 20. *Twelve brazen bulls which were under the bases.*] Or rather, *which were instead of bases,* to support the brazen sea. (See 1 Kings vii. 25.) So the Septuagint understand it. The Hebrew word *tachath,* elsewhere signifies *instead,* or *in the place of* another. (See Lev. xvi. 32. Esth. ii. 17. 2 Chron. vi. 10.)

Ver. 21. *The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits,* &c.] The same account is given of the height of these pillars, 1 Kings vii. 15. but in 2 Chron. iii. 15. it is said, that both the pillars made thirty-five cubits; which two texts may easily be reconciled, by allowing one cubit for the basis.

And a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it.] So that the diameter was almost four cubits.

And the thickness thereof was four fingers.] The pillar being hollow, the thickness of the work that encompassed the hollow space was four fingers over.

Ver. 22. *The height of one chapiter was five cubits.*] With this account agrees the text in 1 Kings vii. 16. and 2 Chron. iii. 15. but in 2 Kings xxv. 17. it is said, *the height of the chapiter was three cubits:* which difference commentators reconcile, by saying, that the chapiter with the net-work and pomegranates here mentioned, was five cubits high, but without them it was but three.

Ver. 23. *And there were ninety-six pomegranates on a side, and all the pomegranates were a hundred round about.*] That is, there were four-and-twenty on each side, or quarter, and one in each angle. (Compare 2 Chron. iii. 16.) We read 1 Kings vii. 20. that there were two hundred pomegranates to each chapiter, and the text in 2 Chron. iv. 13. agrees with that account: which texts are reconciled, by supposing that there were two rows of pomegranates one above another, and each row consisted of a hundred, and the words in 1 Kings vii. 20. intimate as much. Dr. Lightfoot understands the words in Jeremiah in this sense: When the pillars were set to the wall, only ninety-six pomegranates could be seen; the other four being hid behind the pillar, as it stood up close to the wall: so he translates the former part of the verse thus, *And there were ninety-six pomegranates on the open sides,* or *towards the open air:* which sense he conceives the word *ruchah* to import. (See his Description of the Temple, chap. 13. sect. 2.)

Ver. 24. *And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest.*] See 1 Chron. vi. 14. He was the father of Ezra. (See Ezra vii. 1.)

And Zephaniah the second priest.] The high-priest's substitute, in his absence, to oversee the affairs of the temple. (See xxix. 25.) This person is called the sagan by the Chaldee paraphrast here, and in the parallel place, 2 Kings xxv. The latter Jews tell us, it was an especial part of his office to supply the place of the high-priest, on the great day of expiation, if any accident should render him unqualified for officiating himself: of which Josephus gives an instance, Antiq. lib. xvii. cap. 8.

And the three keepers of the door.] There were a great many porters belonging to the temple, as has been observed upon xxxv. 4. but these probably had the custody of the holy vessels, or of the treasury. (See 1 Chron. ix. 26. and Dr. Lightfoot's Description of the Temple, chap. 5. sect. 3.)

Ver. 25. *He took also out of the city an eunuch.*] The word is better rendered an *officer,* 2 Kings xxv. 19. (See Jer. xxxiv. 19.)

And seven men of them that were near the king's person.] *Who saw the king's face;* as it is in the Hebrew: the same character which is given to the seven princes of Persia, Esth. i. 14. In 2 Kings xxvi. 19. there is mention made but of five.

And the principal scribe of the host.] The muster-master-general, as we style him; or the secretary of war.

And therefore men—that were found in the midst of the city.] These were eminent persons who had concealed themselves, but were afterward discovered.

Ver. 28. *This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive.*] Archbishop Usher, in his Chronolog. S. p. 36. supposes, that this and the two following verses give an account of the lesser captivities which the Jews suffered under Nebuchadnezzar; whereas, there were three others, in which many more persons were carried away, *viz.* in the

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first year of his reign, (Dan. i. 3.) in the eighth year mentioned 2 Kings xxiv. 12. and in the nineteenth, when the city was destroyed, an entire riddance was made of the inhabitants which were left after the former captivities.

In the seventh year three thousand Jews, and three-and-twenty.] Upon Jehoiakim's rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar, he ordered the governors of the neighbouring provinces to make war upon him, who invaded his kingdom from every quarter. The Ammonites, Moabites, and other subjects to the Babylonish empire, infesting Judea with frequent incursions: (see 2 Kings xxiv. 2, 3.) and in the last year of Jehoiakim's reign, which is coincident with the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, (see Jer. xxv. 1.) the captivity here mentioned happened.

Ver. 29. *In the eighteenth of Nebuchadnezzar,* &c.] This was when Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege of Jerusalem, to march against the king of Egypt, who came with a great army to the relief of the place. (See xxxvii. 5.) At which time he sent all the captive Jews which were in his camp to Babylon. (See Archbishop Usher's Chronolog. S. p. 38.)

Ver. 30. *In the three-and-twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar,* &c.] When Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to Tyre, which was in the borders of Judea, Nebuzar-adan made this expedition into the country, and carried with him the captives here mentioned; who seem to be no others than the poor people, that he himself had left to manure the ground, (ver. 1.) And this he probably did by way of revenge for the murder of Gedaliah.

Ver. 31. *In the seven-and-thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin,* &c.] This note of time confirms the observation already made upon xxv. 1. *viz.* That the Scripture computation of the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, anticipates that of Ptolemy's canon by two years, which two years he reigned with his father. For if we add the thirty-seven years of his reign here mentioned, to the eight years of it which preceded Jehoiachin's captivity, (see 2 Kings xxiv. 12.) that sum will amount to five-and-forty years: whereas, according to the common account, he reigned but three-and-forty.

In the five-and-twentieth day of the month.] It is the twenty-seventh day, in 2 Kings xxv. 27. This advancement might be resolved upon the twenty-fifth day, but not brought to pass till the twenty-seventh.

Evil-Merodach.] His name was Merodach, a name common among the kings of Babylon. (See Isa. xxxix. 1.) But he had this mark of distinction given him by way of reproach, for the word implies as much as *foolish Merodach,* because he was a profligate and vicious prince.

In the first year of his reign.] The words are better rendered in 2 Kings xxv. 28. *In the year when he began to reign.*

Lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, and brought him out of prison.] St. Jerome, in his commentaries upon Isa. xiv. reports, from an ancient tradition of the Jews, that Evil-Merodach having had the government of the Babylonish empire during his father's distraction, used his power so ill, that as soon as the old king came to himself, he put him in prison for it, where he contracted a particular acquaintance with Jehoiachin, who was his fellow-prisoner, and that this was the cause of the great kindness he expressed towards him.

Ver. 32. *Above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.*] Who had the title of kings reserved to them after their captivity, as Porus had after he was vanquished by Alexander.

Ver. 33. *He did continually eat bread before him.*] Sat with him at his own table. (Compare 2 Sam. ix. 7. 11.)

Ver. 34. *For his diet, there was a continual diet given him,* &c.] This allowance was for his attendants and family. (See ibid. ver. 10.)

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A

COMMENTARY

UPON THE

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

CHAP. I.

ARGUMENT.

I observed in the Argument to the fifty-second of Jeremiah, that that chapter was added, at the end of his prophecy, as a prologue or introduction to his book of Lamentations: which was originally joined to the former, but is now divided from it in the modern Jews' copies, which place this book, among other smaller tracts, such as the Canticles, Ruth, &c. at the end of the Pentateuch. This is a plain proof, that the order of the books of the Old Testament, in which the Jewish copies at present place them, is but of later date, and differs from that order in which Ezra placed the holy writings, when he collected them into one body. In which collection, Daniel had a place among the prophets: though the Jews, since the time of Christ, have thrust him down among the Hagiographa, contrary to the character their forefathers gave of him, as appears from Josephus, who calls him a prophet, *nay, one of the greatest of the prophets,* (Antiq. lib. x. cap. 12.) in agreement with which opinion our Saviour gives him the same title, Matt. xxiv. 25.

Instead of that ancient preface to the Lamentations, the Greek and Latin copies have a short introduction, briefly setting forth the subject of the book, which may be thus translated: *It came to pass, that after Israel was carried captive, and Jerusalem desolate, the prophet Jeremiah sat weeping, and bewailed Jerusalem with this Lamentation, and bitterly weeping and mourning, said, as follows.* This Argument was occasioned, as Huetius probably conjectures, (Demonstrat. Evang. prop. iv. cap. 14.) by removing the fifty-second chapter from the place where it first stood, and placing it as a conclusion to the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Archbishop Usher, in his Annals, ad A. M. 3394. and some other learned men, following the opinion of Josephus, and St. Jerome, have supposed the Lamentations to have been written on occasion of Josiah's death: (see Lam. iv. 20.) which was an introduction to the fatal catastrophe of their church and nation. But whoever carefully reads this pathetical description of the miseries of Judah and Jerusalem, may be easily convinced, that this is not so much a prediction of evils to come, as a lively representation of a present calamity.

In which kind of writing the prophet Jeremiah was a great master, according to the character Grotius gives of him, "Mirus in affectibus concitandis Jeremias;" *that he had a wonderful talent in exciting the passions.*

Ver. 1. *HOW doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become a widow!*] Cities are commonly described as the mothers of their inhabitants, and their kings and princes as their husbands. So, when they are bereaved of these, they are said to be widows and childless. (Compare Isa. ii. 26. xlvii. 8.) Jerusalem, under these circumstances, is described as sitting alone (the multitude of her inhabitants being dispersed and destroyed), and in a pensive condition. (Compare iii. 28.)

She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces.] The kings of Judah, in their flourishing state, made conquests over the Philistines, Edomites, and other neighbouring countries: and by thus enlarging their dominions, advanced the power of the metropolis of their kingdom. (See 2 Sam. viii. 2 Chron. xxvi. 6—8. 2 Kings xviii. 8.)

Ver. 2. *She weepeth sore in the night.*] The darkness or solitude of the night doth naturally promote melancholy reflections. (See Psal. vi. 6. xvi. 7. lxxvii. 6.)

Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her, &c.] All her allies, whose friendship she courted by sinful compliances, (see Jer. iv. 30. xxii. 20. 22.) have forsaken her in her affliction, and join with her enemies in insulting over her.

Ver. 3. *Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude,* &c.] Her miseries have received their finishing stroke, in a total captivity and bondage to a foreign power of infidels and idolaters.

All her persecutors overtook her between the straits.] A metaphor from those that hunt a prey, which they commonly drive into some strait and narrow passage, from whence there is no making an escape.

Ver. 4. *The ways of Zion do mourn, because none cometh to her solemn feasts.*] The highways that lead to Jerusalem

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are unfrequented, because there are none that come up thither at the solemn feasts of the year, the temple and altar being destroyed.

Her virgins are afflicted.] Her calamities afflict the young as well as the old, and spoil all their mirth and gaiety. (See ver. 18. ii. 21. v. 14.)

Ver. 5. *Her adversaries are the chief.*] They have got the advantage over her, and she is become their vassal: and thus the judgment that Moses threatened the Jews upon their disobedience is fulfilled, (Deut. xxviii. 43, 44.) *That their enemies should be the head, and they should be the tail.*

Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.] Her inhabitants (see the note upon ver. 1.) are forced into captivity by the enemies, as cattle are driven in herds by them that sell them.

Ver. 6. *And from the daughter of Zion all beauty is departed.*] All the glory of God's sanctuary, and comely order of his worship, called the *beauty of holiness*, Exod. xxviii. 2. Psal. vi. 9. cx. 3.

The princes are become like harts that find no pasture, &c.] They are become dispirited, they have lost their courage, and tamely submitted to the conqueror. (See the note on Jer. xiv. 5.)

Ver. 7. *Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and misery all her pleasant things which she had in the days of old.*] The benefits she enjoyed from God's favour and protection, the honour of his peculiar presence in the temple, and the manifestation he gave of his will by the prophets. (Compare ver. 10.) The Hebrew word *merudim*, translated *misery*, signifies banishment and captivity: to which sense the LXX. translate it.

The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.] The heathen writers commonly ridicule the Jewish sabbaths, as a mark of their sloth and idleness; without considering the excellent uses that day was designed for, *viz.* to give men leisure to attend upon the service of God, and learn the duties of religion.

Ver. 8. *Because they have seen her nakedness.*] She is stripped of all her ornaments, and carried naked and bare into captivity. As she has defiled herself with idolatry (called spiritual adultery in Scripture), so God has ordered her to be exposed to shame, like a common harlot. (See the note upon Jer. xiii. 22.)

Ver. 9. *Her filthiness is in her skirts.*] She carries the marks of her sins in the greatness of her punishments. The phrase alludes to a woman in the state of her separation. (Compare ver. 17.)

She remembereth not her last end.] Or rather, *She hath not remembered her latter end;* that is, what would be the effect and consequence of her sins. (Compare Isa. xlvii. 7.)

Ver. 10. *The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things.*] See ver. 7.

Ver. 11. *All her people sigh, they seek bread.*] See ii. 12. iv. 4. 10. Jer. lii. 6.

Ver. 12. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*] The words may be rendered, *O all ye that pass by*, or, *Oh*, I appeal *to all ye that pass by.* The word *lo*, or *lu*, is sometimes used for entreating or conjuring: as if the prophet had said, Let any indifferent person judge, whether any calamity is like to mine.

Ver. 13. *From above he hath sent fire into my bones*, &c.] He hath consumed my habitations by fire, as if he struck me with a blast of lightning, which immediately pierces into the vitals; and he has prevented my making any escape from my enemies, as if he had spread a net under my feet to hinder my flight.

Ver. 14. *The yoke of my transgression is bound by his hand*, &c.] He has laid upon me the burden of my iniquities, and inflicted such heavy punishments on me, that I must sink under them. The Septuagint and the Vulgar Latin, with very little variation, read, *He watcheth over my transgressions.* To the same sense Daniel saith, *the Lord hath watched over the evil*, Dan. ix. 14. and Job, xiv. 16. *Thou watchest over my sin:* that is, thou diligently markest every sin I commit, that thou mayest in due time requite it with a proper punishment.

Ver. 15. *The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me.*] The destruction that is made by war is elsewhere expressed by treading under foot. (See the note on Jer. i. 26.)

He hath called an assembly against me, &c.] The army of the Chaldeans.

The Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a wine-press.] That people that was formerly betrothed to him as a chaste spouse, and secured from all violent attempts by his immediate protection, (see the notes on Jer. xiv. 13. xviii. 17.) God has now given up to the fury of their enemies, who have made such an effusion of their blood, as may be fitly represented by the squeezing out of the red juice of grapes by a wine-press: to which God's vengeance is often compared in the prophetical writings. (See Isa. lxiii. 3. Rev. xiv. 19, 20. xix. 15.)

Ver. 16. *Because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me.*] See ver. 2. 9.

Ver. 17. *Zion spreadeth forth her hands.*] A gesture of entreating and importunity. (See Jer. iv. 31.)

The Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, &c.] It is the Divine decree and pleasure.

Jerusalem is a menstruous woman among them.] Whom every body loathes or disdains: she is looked upon as abominable in the sight of God, and therefore men think they have a right to use her with despite and scorn. (See Jer. l. 7.)

Ver. 18. *Hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow.*] See ver. 12.

Ver. 19. *I called for my lovers, but they deceived me.*] See ver. 2.

My priests and my elders gave up the ghost in the city, &c.] The famine hath consumed the most honourable, as well as the meaner part, of the people. (See ver. 11.)

My bowels are troubled, my heart is turned within me.] Compare Jer. iv. 19. xlviii. 36. Job xxx. 27.

Ver. 20. *Abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.*] Compare Deut. xxxii. 25. The latter part of the sentence may better be rendered, *At home there is certain death;* for the particle of similitude doth sometimes strongly affirm, as commentators have observed upon those words of St. John, i. 14. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father:" such a glory as could belong to none but the Son of God.

Ver. 21. *They have heard that I sigh.*] That is, mine enemies, as it follows.

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They are glad that thou hast done it.] They please themselves with the thought, that our God, of whose favour and protection we used to boast, should forsake us, and give us up as a prey to our enemies. (See ii. 15, 16.)

Thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, &c.] The day when thou wilt execute thy judgments upon the Babylonians, will certainly come at the time thou hast determined for that purpose.

Ver. 22. *Let all their wickedness come before thee.*] Let it appear, that *though thou chastenest us, thou punishest our enemies a thousand times more:* as the author of the book of Wisdom speaks, Wisd. xii. 22. (Compare Jer. x. 25.)

Do unto them as thou hast done unto me.] Some render the words, *Glean them as thou hast gleaned me;* that is, make an entire riddance or destruction of them. (Compare Jer. vi. 9.)

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND hath cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel.*] The temple, and all its glory. (See i. 6.)

And remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger.] And even spared not the ark itself, the footstool to the Shechinah, or Divine glory, which sat between or upon the cherubims, as in a throne. (See 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Psal. xcix. 5. cxxxiii. 7.)

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath swallowed up the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied.*] Without shewing any pity or concern for them. (See ver. 17. and iii. 43.)

He hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.] He hath shewed no regard to the kingdom, which himself hath settled upon the family of David, but involved the royal family in one common destruction with the rest of the people. The expression is much the same with that of Psal. lxxxix. 39. "Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground."

Ver. 3. *He hath cut off in his anger all the horn of Israel.*] By the *horn of Israel,* is meant his strength and glory, Job xvi. 15. Psal. lxxv. 5. especially his kingly dignity. (See Psal. lxxxix. 24. xcii. 10. cxxxii. 18.)

He hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy.] He hath withdrawn his wonted assistance, and given us up into the hands of our enemies. (Compare Psal. lxxiv. 11.)

Ver. 4. *And shew all that was pleasant to the eye.*] The chiefest in worth and dignity: those who were in the flower of their age, the joy and delight of their parents. (See i. 15. Ezek. xxiv. 25.)

Ver. 5. *He hath swallowed up Israel.*] As a lion devoureth his prey. The verb rendered to *swallow up,* signifies in a general sense, to destroy. (See Isa. iii. 12.)

Ver. 6. *He hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden,* &c.] He hath destroyed the temple, the place of his residence, and of our religious assemblies, as if it had been no better than a tabernacle or cottage, set up in a garden or vineyard, just while the fruit is gathering, and then to be taken down again. (Compare Isa. i. 8.) The margin reads, *He hath taken away his hedge, as of a garden;* that is, he hath withdrawn his protection, and left us exposed to the fury of our enemies. (Compare Isa. v. 5.)

The Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion.] See i. 1.

And hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.] And shewed no regard for either of those honourable offices, but hath suffered the kingdom to be destroyed, and the temple laid waste.

Ver. 7. *They have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast.*] Instead of the joyful sound of praises and thanksgivings to God, such as used to be solemnly performed in the temple at the public festivals; there was nothing to be heard there but the noise of soldiers, and rudeness of infidels, profaning that sacred place, and insulting over the God that was worshipped there. (Compare Psal. lxxiv. 4.)

[Ver. 8. *The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion.*] Dr. Lightfoot explains this of the wall which encompassed the temple and its outward courts. See his Description of the Temple, chap. 17.]

He hath stretched out a line.] The instruments designed for building, are in some places applied to destroying, because sometimes men mark out those buildings they intend to pull down. So 2 Kings xxi. 13. God saith, *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria;* and *the line of confusion,* is mentioned Isa. xxxiv. 11. (See likewise Amos vii. 7, 8.)

[Ver. 9. *Her king and her princes are among the gentiles.*] The king of Babylon's officers carried away captive all the royal family, and likewise all the men of note for valour or quality, and left none behind but the poorest people of the land. See 2 Kings xxiv. 14—16. xxv. 7. 11, 12.]

[*The law is no more.*] The priests and Levites, whose office it is to instruct the people in the law, are dispersed among the heathen: and that part of the law which regards the public worship of God, is rendered impracticable by the temple's being destroyed.]

The prophets also find no vision from the Lord.] The prophets are either dead, or those that are alive in captivity, as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jeremiah himself; these are not favoured with Divine revelations as they were wont to be, and so cannot resolve the doubts of those that come to them for advice. (Compare Ezek. vii. 26.)

Ver. 10. *The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast dust upon their heads.*] Expressions of the deepest mourning and sorrow. (See iii. 28. Job ii. 12, 13. Isa. iii. 26. xlvii. 15.)

Ver. 11. *Mine eyes do fail with tears.*] I have lost my sight with weeping. (Compare v. 17. Psal. vi. 7. xxxi. 2.)

My liver is poured upon the earth.] My vitals seem to be dissolved, and have lost all their strength. (Compare Job xvi. 13. Psal. xxii. 14.)

Because the children and sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.] For want of sustenance. (See ver. 19. and iv. 4.)

Ver. 12. *When they swooned as the wounded.*] Who are not presently despatched, but die of a lingering death. (See iv. 9.)

Ver. 13. *What thing shall I take to witness for thee?* &c.] What instance can I bring of any calamity like thine, that such an example may be some mitigation of thy complaints?

For thy breach is as great as the sea, &c.] It is like the breaking in of the sea, that overflows a whole country, where no stop can be put to the inundation.

Ver. 14. *The prophets have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity.*] They have not given the

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people a just sense of their iniquities, in order to avert God's judgments: but rather flatter them in their sins, and in hopes of impunity. (See Jer. v. 31. xiv. 14.)

[*False burdens.*] The Hebrew word *massa* is usually translated *burden*, and generally signifies a burdensome prophecy. (See the note on Jer. xxiii. 33.) But it likewise imports prophecy, in general, (see Prov. xxx. 1. xxxi. 1.) and so it is used here; for Jeremy complains of those impostors who prophesied peace, and soothed men up in their sins, to their final destruction.]

Ver. 15. *All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their heads.*] Gestures of derision, whereby the enemies of the Jews expressed a satisfaction in their calamities. (See Jer. xviii. 6. 1 Kings ix. 8. Ezek. xxv. 6.)

Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?] Or, *the whole land?* (See Psal. xlviii. 2.) Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jewish nation, and highly valued by them for the magnificence of their temple, and the presence of the true God there: whither the whole nation resorted to celebrate their solemn festivals, which were observed with all the magnificence of a religious joy. Their being deprived of those ornaments, gave occasion to their enemies to insult over them. (See Psal. lxxix. 4.)

Ver. 16. *All thine enemies have opened their mouths against thee.*] As if they were ready to swallow thee up. (Compare iii. 46. Job xvi. 9, 10. Psal. xxii. 13.)

Ver. 17. *He hath fulfilled his word which he had commanded in the days of old.*] He hath fulfilled those threatenings which he denounced against our disobedience to the law of Moses. (See Lev. xxvi. 31, &c. Deut. xxvii. 25, 26. 49, &c.) The word *command* is sometimes used for any part of the covenant, which God had engaged himself to perform. (See Psal. cv. 8. cxi. 9.)

He hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.] Advanced their power and glory. (See ver. 3.)

Ver. 18. *Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion,* &c.] As the wall and rampart are said to lament, (ver. 8.) because their ruins are objects of lamentation: so here devout persons, upon the destruction of the city, direct their prayers to God, as if the ruins themselves did entreat him to take compassion on the miseries of that place which he had chosen for his peculiar residence. (See the like prosopopœia, Habak. ii. 11.) To this purpose the Vulgar Latin expresses the sense, "Clamavit cor meum super muris filiæ Zion;" *My heart cried unto the Lord concerning the walls of the daughter of Zion.*

Ver. 19. *Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches,* &c.] Devout persons shewed their earnestness in prayer, by attending upon it late at night, and early in the morning, when others give themselves up to sloth and drowsiness. (See Psal. lxiii. 6. cxix. 55. 147, 148. Isa. xxvi. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 7.) The Jews divided the night into three watches; (see Judg. vii. 19.) and in aftertimes into four. (See Matt. xiv. 25. Mark xiii. 35. Luke xii. 38.) The first watch was reckoned from the time of going to bed.

Pour out thine heart like water.] Offer up thy earnest prayers with tears to the throne of grace: and send up thy very soul, and thy devoutest affections, along with them. (Compare 1 Sam. vii. 6. Psal. lxii. 8.)

Lift up thy hands unto him for the life of thy young children, &c.] See ver. 11.

At the top of every street.] See the same phrase, iv. 1. Isa. li. 20. Nahum iii. 10. Noldius thinks the expression means the same, as *in every street.* (See his Concordance, p. 214.)

Ver. 20. *Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this.*] To thy people, for whom thou hast formerly expressed so much tenderness and affection.

Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long?] The margin reads, *Swaddled with their hands:* in which sense the word is used, ver. 22. We find, by comparing this verse with iv. 10. that God brought upon them that terrible judgment which he had denounced against them, if they continued to provoke him; *viz.* That they should *eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters,* (Lev. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 53. Jer. xix. 13.)

Ver. 21. *The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets.*] Either they lie slain without any regard to age or condition: or else they lie prostrate there, in a desponding manner, and just ready to give up the ghost. (See ver. 10.)

Ver. 22. *Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about.*] Terrors come upon me on every side by thy appointment; just as multitudes use to flock to Jerusalem at the times of the solemn feasts. The phrase *magor missabib, fear or terror on every side,* is elsewhere used, by Jeremiah, to express great desolation and misery. (See Jer. vi. 25. xx. 3. xlvi. 5. xlix. 19.)

CHAP. III.

ARGUMENT.

This chapter is writ in a different metre from the two former, and that which follows, as St. Jerome hath observed in his preface to the Lamentations: and whereas in those the first letter of every verse follows the order of the alphabet, here the same initial letter is continued for three verses together.

The subject of the chapter is penitential meditations upon the prophet's own calamities, as well as those of the public: together with pious reflections upon the end which God proposes in sending afflictions, and the good use men ought to make of such chastisements.

Ver. 1. *I AM the man that have seen afflictions.*] The prophet speaks with a particular regard to the ill treatment he met with in the discharge of his prophetical office. (Compare Jer. xv. 10. 17, 18. xx. 8, &c. xxvi. 8, &c. xxxvi. 26. xxxvii. 15. xxxviii. 6.)

Ver. 2. *He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.*] Light is often used in Scripture for happiness or comfort, and darkness for affliction and misery. (See Isa. lix. 9. Jer. xiii. 16. Amos v. 20.) The words probably allude to the prophet's being cast into the dungeon. (See ver. 53. 55.)

Ver. 3. *He turneth his hand against me all the day.*] God, that was formerly kind and gracious, now exercises continual acts of severity. *He turneth his hand against me,* is a phrase equivalent to that we read, Isa. i. 25. *I will turn my hand upon thee.* (See the note there.)

Ver. 4. *My flesh and my skin hath he made old.*] Compare Job xvi. 8. Psal. xxxi. 10. xxxii. 3.

He hath broken my bones.] The anguish I feel in my

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mind is as painful to me as if all my bones were broken. (Compare Psal. li. 8. Isa. xxxviii. 13.)

Ver. 5. *He hath builded against me on every side.*] He hath enclosed me on every side, that there is no escaping the miseries that surround me. (Compare ver. 7. 9.)

He hath compassed me with gall and travail.] See ver. 19.

Ver. 6. *He hath set me in dark places,* &c.] He hath confined me to a dungeon, where no light enters; and I am sequestered from human society, as if I were out of the world. (Compare ver. 53, 54. Psal. lxxxviii. 5, 6.)

Ver. 7. *He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out.*] See ver. 5. and compare Job iii. 23. xix. 8. The words may allude to the siege of Jerusalem.

He hath made my chain heavy.] He hath made my bondage, or my imprisonment, grievous.

Ver. 8. *Also when I cry and shout* [or call aloud], *he shutteth out my prayer.*] Refuseth to hearken to it, or give me any ease or relief. God's answering men's requests, is commonly expressed by hearkening to their prayers. (Compare Job xxx. 20.)

Ver. 9. *He hath enclosed my way with hewn stone.*] See ver. 5. 7.

He hath made my paths crooked.] So that I know not which way to turn myself. (See ver. 11.)

Ver. 10. *He was to me as a bear lying in wait,* &c.] He falls upon me with the fierceness of his anger, as a bear or lion seizes upon his prey. (Compare Job x. 16. Hos. v. 14. xiii. 7, 8.)

Ver. 11. *He hath turned aside my ways,* &c.] He disappoints all my undertakings, he layeth my country desolate, and makes it to cease from being a nation, or body politic.

Ver. 12, 13. *He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow,* &c.] He hath made me the mark and object of his indignation. (Compare Job xvi. 12, 13. Psal. xxxviii. 2.)

Ver. 13. *The arrows of his quiver.*] Called here in the Hebrew, the *sons of his quiver,* by an elegant metaphor, as they are called *the sons of the bow,* Job xli. 28. By the same metaphor, sparks are called the *sons of coal,* Job v. 7.

Ver. 14. *I was a derision of all my people.*] This may be understood of Jeremiah himself; (see Jer. xx. 7.) but some critics suppose the word *ammi,* rendered *my people,* to stand for *ammin, the people,* as the word is used in some places; (see 2 Sam. xxii. 44. Micah vi. 26. compared with Psal. xviii. 44.) and then this sentence is to be understood of the Jewish nation, and imports, that their miseries exposed them to the scorn and reproach of all the neighbouring countries. (See ii. 15.)

And their song all the day.] See ver. 63. Job xxx. 9. Psal. lxix. 2.

Ver. 15. *He hath made me drunk with wormwood.*] See ver. 19.

Ver. 16. *He hath broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.*] In this and the foregoing verse, the prophet aggravates the calamities of his people by such expressions as imply, that instead of any support or comfort, they find nothing but miseries and afflictions. (See the note on Jer. ix. 15.) The Septuagint render the latter part of the verse, *He hath fed me with ashes; i. e.* We fare as hard as those who feed upon bread baked in ashes, whose teeth are in danger of being broke with grits and stones. (Compare Job vi. 7. Psal. cii. 9.) This translation Noldius defends in his Concordance, p. 168.

Ver. 17. *I forgat prosperity.*] I have been a stranger to prosperity long enough to wear the remembrance of it out of my mind: so Joseph, speaking of the seven years of famine, saith, That *plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt,* (Gen. xli. 30.) By the same figure, the prophet Isaiah describing happy times, saith, *The former troubles are forgotten,* (lxv. 16.)

Ver. 18. *And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.*] I began to despair of God's mercy. (See Psal. xxxi. 22.)

Ver. 19. *Remembering my affliction and my misery,* [or banishment, see i. 7.] *the wormwood and the gall.*] Wormwood and gall are put for the most severe and rigorous treatment. (See the notes on Jer. ix. 15.)

Ver. 20. *My soul hath them still in remembrance.*] I have still new occasions to remember them.

Ver. 21. *This I recall to mind.*] The reflections set down in the following verses, are a sufficient ground for our trust in God under the severest trials.

Ver. 22. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.*] The Septuagint and Chaldee paraphrase render the sentence, *Because the Lord's mercies are not at an end.*

Ver. 23. *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*] Thy mercies are renewed to us every day; and thy faithfulness in performing them is as great as thy goodness in promising them. God's mercy and truth, or fidelity, are usually joined together. (See Gen. xxxii. 10. Psal. lvii. 10. c. 4.)

Ver. 24. *The Lord is my portion.*] An interest in the favour and promises of God is the best inheritance. (See Jer. x. 16.)

Ver. 25. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him,* &c.] To them that patiently wait his time, when he thinks it a proper season to afford them comfort and deliverance: and in the meanwhile apply themselves to him by prayers and humiliation. (See the following verse.)

Ver. 27. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*] It is good to be inured betimes, to bear those useful restraints which arise from a sense of the duty we owe to God, and the obedience we ought to pay to his laws.

Ver. 28. *He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence.*] The discipline of afflictions makes a man serious and thoughtful, it disposes him to reflect upon himself and his ways, and instructs him to acquiesce in the disposals of Providence.

Ver. 29. *He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.*] He prostrates himself even to the ground before Almighty God, in token of the deepest humiliation of his soul, (see Psal. cxix. 25.) if by that means he may recover the Divine favour.

Ver. 30. *He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him.*] He not only humbles himself in the sight of God; but likewise patiently bears the ill treatment of men. (Compare Isa. l. 6.)

Ver. 33. *For he doth not afflict willingly,* &c.] God doth not take pleasure in the misery of men, or in exercising his authority over them, but designs all his chastisements for our good. (See Heb. xii. 9, 10.)

Ver. 34—36. *To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth,* &c.—*the Lord approveth not.*] As God takes no pleasure in oppressing the poor and helpless, so neither

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will he suffer any men to escape unpunished that are guilty of such acts of injustice and cruelty, who never consider that all the wrongs they do are committed in the sight of the supreme Judge of the world; and although at present he thinks fit to prosper such oppressors, the Chaldeans in particular, yet in due time he will call them to a severe account for their wickedness.

Ver. 37. *Who is he that saith, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?*] The king of Babylon, and such haughty tyrants, may boast of their power, as if it were equal to omnipotence itself: but still it is God's prerogative to bring to pass whatever he pleases, without any let or impediment, only by speaking or declaring his purpose, that the thing should be done, as he did at the beginning of the creation: (see Psal. xxxiii. 7.) and ever since nothing is brought to pass, but according to his *determinate counsel and foreknowledge:* who, as he makes men the instrument of his vengeance, so he can restrain their cruelty whenever he thinks fit.

Ver. 38. *Out of the mouth of the Most High proceeds not evil and good?*] Do not calamities come from God's will and disposal, as well as prosperity? (See Isa. xlv. 7. Amos iii. 6.)

Ver. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?*] If we consider God's afflictions as a just reward of our evil deeds, this will prevent all murmuring and repining against Providence: especially as long as men are on this side of the grave, they ought to be thankful for having an opportunity given them of repentance.

Ver. 43. *Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us.*] See ii. 1. Or the words may be rendered, *Thou hast covered thy face in anger,* &c. (See the next verse.)

Ver. 44. *Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud.*] The same sense is elsewhere expressed by God's *hiding his face.*

Ver. 45. *Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.*] That is, of the heathen nations, whither thou hast driven us; (see ver. 14. ii. 15.) St. Paul plainly alludes to this text, 1 Cor. iv. 13. and translates the Hebrew word *maus, refuse,* by the Greek Περίψημα. I have observed in the notes upon Jer. xxv. 10. that the apostles, in quoting the Scriptures, do not always follow the Septuagint, but now and then make a new translation of the words out of the Hebrew.

Ver. 46. *All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.*] See the note on ii. 16. Or else the words may be understood of the reproaches they utter against us, and the God whom we worship. (Compare Rev. xiii. 6.)

Ver. 47. *Fear and the snare is come upon us.*] See Jer. xlviii. 43.

Desolation and destruction.] The expression is much the same in the original with that we meet with Isa. li. 19. (See the note there.)

Ver. 51. *Mine eye affecteth mine heart.*] Or, preys upon my heart: my grief wears out my health and strength. Abraham à Schultens, in his Animadvers. on Job, p. 47. observes, that *nalal* signifies, in Arabic, to weaken, grieve, or make sick.

Ver. 52. *Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.*] The prophet in this and the following verses describes his own sufferings, when his enemies seized him and put him into the dungeon, (Jer. xxxvii. 16. xxxviii. 6.) He compares them to a fowler that is in pursuit of a bird; so, saith he, they sought all opportunities to take an advantage against me, and to deprive me of life or liberty: and this they did without any provocation given on his part. So the word *hinnam, without cause,* signifies. (Compare Psal. xxxv. 7. 19. lxix. 4. cix. 3.)

Ver. 53. *They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.*] I was not only sequestered from all human society, like a dead man, (see ver. 6.) but in apparent danger of losing my life in the dungeon. (See Jer. xxxvii. 24. xxxviii. 9, 10.) And their laying a stone upon the entrance of that dark cavern, resembled the burying me alive. (Compare Dan. vi. 17. Matt. xxvii. 60.)

Ver. 54. *Waters flowed over my head; then I said, I am cut off.*] When I sunk down into the mire in the dungeon, I despaired of my life, just as if I had been sinking over head and ears in a river. (Compare Psal. lxix. 2.) And I said, I am cut off from the land of the living. (See Psal. xxxi. 2. Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11.)

Ver. 56. *Hide not thine ear at my breathing.*] Or, *sighing:* God's answering our prayers is commonly expressed by *opening his ears:* hiding them denotes the contrary.

Ver. 60. *Thou hast seen all their vengeance,* &c.] See Jer. xi. 19.

Ver. 63. *Behold their sitting down, and their uprising; I am their music.*] In every part of their life (compare Psal. cxxxix. 2.) I am the object of their scorn and derision. (See ver. 14.)

Ver. 64. *Render to them a recompence,* &c.] See the note upon Jer. xi. 20.

Ver. 66. *Destroy them—from under the heavens of the Lord.*] Let them be destroyed from off the face of the earth. (Compare Jer. x. 11.)

CHAP. IV.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet returns to the same metre he used in the two first chapters, and treats of the same subject.

Ver. 1. ***HOW** is the gold become dim!* &c.] How is the glory of the temple obscured! The sanctuary which was overlaid with gold (see 2 Chron. iii. 8.) now lies in ruins: and the stones of it are not distinguished from common rubbish! In like manner, the priests and Levites, who attended upon God's service, and the elders of the people, the members of the great Sanhedrin, who kept their court within the precincts of the temple; (see the note on Jer. xxxv. 4.) these persons, that might be resembled to the pillars or corner-stones of that sacred building, are now involved in the same common destruction with the meanest of the people. (See ver. 16. ii. 20.)

At the top of every street.] See the note on ii. 19.

Ver. 2. *The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers!*] Those that in honour and worth exceed the meanest, as much as gold doth earthenware, now lie undistinguished in their death. The words are an explication of what is said in more general terms in the verse before.

Ver. 3. *Even the sea-monsters draw out the breast,* &c.]

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[Dr. Pocock translates the word *tannin, jackals,* sea-monsters having no breasts. See the notes upon Micah i. 8.] The word *tannin* signifies any great fish, as a whale or a crocodile: (see the note on Isa. xxvii. 1.) and is here very fitly rendered *sea-monsters.* These the prophet saith are not so unnatural, as to neglect the care of their young ones: whereas the women of Jerusalem have been reduced to that miserable necessity, as not only to disregard their children, not having wherewithal to provide for themselves, but likewise to feed upon them, (ver. 4. 10.)

Like the ostriches in the wilderness.] See Job xxxix. 14. 16.

Ver. 5. *They that were bred up in scarlet, embrace dunghills.*] Are content to lie down upon a dunghill, or to seek for food there. (Compare Job xxiv. 8.)

Ver. 6. *That was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.*] Sodom was not given up into the hands of an enemy that laid siege to it, nor condemned to the lingering destruction of famine. (See ver. 9.)

[Ver. 7. *Her Nazarites.*] A *Nazarite* signifies a person dedicated to God. Their vow did often include an attendance upon the worship of God in the temple. (See the note upon Amos ii. 11.) It is of such Nazarites the word seems here to be meant.]

They were more ruddy in body than rubies.] Or, *Their skin was clearer than rubies,* or pearls, as Bochart translates the words, (Hierozoic. lib. ii. cap. 6.) The word *adam* signifies clear, or transparent, and is so to be understood, Cant. v. 10. where our translation renders it *ruddy,* as it does here. Thus the Latin word *purpureus* is used by Virgil, when he saith, "Lumenque juventæ purpureum." Ludolphus renders the words, *They were more beautiful than pearls;* from the sense which the word *adam* still retains in the Ethiopic language, where it signifies *beautiful:* from which signification he supposes the first man had the name of Adam. (See his Commentary in Histor. Æthiop. lib. i. n. 107.)

Ver. 8. *Their visage is blacker than a coal.*] The famine and other hardships they have endured have spoiled their complexion, and made them look dry and withered. (Compare v. 10.)

Ver. 9. *Stricken through for want of the fruits of the earth.*] Their vitals are pierced through as if they had been pierced with a sword, but with this difference, that it is by famine, the most cruel, because the most lingering death. The preposition *mîn* is rightly translated *for want of;* so it is taken, Jer. xlviii. 45. (See the note there.)

Ver. 10. *The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children.*] The affection of a mother towards her child is the strongest of all natural affections, (compare Isa. xlix. 15.) and yet the famine hath forced that tender sex to divest themselves of it. (See ii. 20.)

Ver. 11. *He hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.*] It hath made an entire destruction, so as not to leave *one stone upon another.* (See Jer. vii. 20.)

Ver. 12. *The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed,* &c.] The city was so well fortified, and had been so often miraculously preserved by God from the attempts of its enemies, that it seemed incredible that it should at last fall into their hands.

Ver. 13. *For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests.*] See Jer. v. 31. vi 13. xxiii. 11. Ezek. xxii. 26. 28. Zeph. iii. 4.

Ver. 14. *They have wandered as blind men in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood.*] When they fled for their lives they were like blind men, not knowing which way to go, because of the many carcasses which lay in their way: whereby they became stained with blood, and so legally polluted. (See Numb. xix. 16.) Thus they carried the marks of their sin in their punishment.

So that men could not touch their garments.] The syntax, in the original, is very obscure, which causes different interpretations of the sentence. Some render it, *They touched* [the blood] *with their garments,* which they might not lawfully do: in which sense the verb *yacal* is used, Deut. xii. 17. Others translate the words, *So that they could not but touch it with their garments:* which made others cry, *Depart,* &c. as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 15. *They cried, Depart, depart, it is unclean;* [or, ye polluted] *depart,* &c.] When they fled to save their lives, they could find no safe retreat, but every body shunned and avoided them: and used the same words to express their abhorrence of this defilement of such persons, whose office it was to cleanse and purify others, as the lepers were by the law obliged to pronounce upon themselves, and cry, *Unclean, unclean.* (See Lev. xiii. 45.) The filthy garments of the priest were an emblem of their filthy minds: (see Zech. iii. 4, 5.) and called to remembrance the innocent blood which had been shed by their means; (see ver. 13.) when people saw their sin thus retaliated upon them.

They said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn there.] When those priests were driven out into heathen countries, every one looked upon their banishment as a just judgment upon their wickedness, and accounted them unworthy to attend any longer upon God's worship in his temple.

Ver. 16. *The anger of the Lord hath divided them,* &c.] God, in his just displeasure, hath scattered and dispersed them into foreign courts, where no respect will be given to their characters.

Ver. 17. *In watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.*] We have long waited for, and have at last been disappointed in, the succours we expecte dfrom the Egyptians. (See Jer. xxxvii. 7. and the note upon xxii. 20.)

Ver. 18. *They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets.*] Our enemies pursue us as wild beasts hunt their prey, and lay wait for us in every turning and corner of the streets. (See 2 Kings xxv. 3, 4.)

Our end is come.] Compare Ezek. vii, 6. Amos viii. 2.

Ver. 19. *Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heavens.*] God has brought upon us that judgment which he threatened by Moses, of *bringing a nation against us as swift as the eagle flieth,* (Deut. xxviii. 49.) Such were the horsemen of the Chaldean army. (See Jer. iv. 13. lii. 8.)

They pursued us upon the mountains; they laid wait for us in the wilderness.] We could no where escape them, neither by flying to the mountains, nor by hiding ourselves in the valleys. The wilderness is elsewhere taken for the lower or pasture grounds. (See Isa. lxiii. 13, 14. Joel i. 19.)

Ver. 20. *The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits,* &c.] This verse some expo-

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sitors understand of king Josiah, and thereupon ground their opinion that the Lamentations were written upon occasion of his death. (See the Argument to chap. i.) But I rather conceive that Zedekiah is here meant, of whom the prophet saith, that he was taken in those toils his enemies had laid to catch him. (See Jer. lii. 8. Ezek. xii. 13.) As long as he was safe, we had hopes of preserving some face of government, although we were carried away into a foreign country.

[*Under his shadow we shall live among the heathens.*] The protection a king affords his subjects, is compared to the shelter of a great tree, which is a covert against storms and tempests. (See Ezek. xvii. 23. xxxi. 6. Dan. iv. 12.) And we might then have hoped to preserve some face of religion and government.]

Ver. 21. *Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom.*] An ironical expression, like that of Solomon, Eccles. xi. 9. *Rejoice, O young man,* &c. As if the prophet had said, Rejoice while thou mayest, O Edom, over the calamities of the Jews. (See Psal. cxxxvii. 7. Obad. ver. 10.) But thy joy will not last long, for, in a little time, it shall come to thy turn to feel God's afflicting hand. (See Jer. xlix. 7, &c.)

That dwellest in the land of Uz.] See the note on Jer. xxv. 20.

The cup also shall pass through unto thee.] See the note on Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

And shall make thyself naked.] God's astonishing judgments, often compared to drunkenness, shall have the usual effect of drunkenness upon thee; *viz.* that thy nakedness shall thereby be discovered. (See the note on Jer. xiii. 22.) The word may be translated, *Thou shalt be made naked:* for the conjugation *hith-pael,* is sometimes taken in a passive sense: as Glassius hath observed, in his Philologia Sacra, p. 840. Some render the word, *And shall empty thyself* [by vomiting]. To this effect of drunkenness God's judgments are compared, Isa. xix. 14. Habak. ii. 16. especially, as that resembles men's disgorging their wealth and treasures when an enemy overpowers them, and leaves them empty and exhausted.

Ver. 22. *The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion.*] It is usual for the prophets, when they have denounced God's judgments against any heathen nation, at the same time to give gracious promises to Israel: thereby importing, that God will never cast off his people utterly, as he doth strangers, but will, in due time, extend his mercy towards them. (Compare Jer. xlvi. 27, 28, l. 18—20. Ezek. xxviii. 24—26. Obad. ver. 17, &c.)

We will no more carry thee into captivity.] Several such-like promises we find in the prophets; (see Jer. xxxi. 40.) such as these of Isaiah, lii. 1. *There shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised, and the unclean:* and, liv. 9. *I have sworn I would not be wroth with thee.* (Compare li. 22.) These and such-like expressions, if they be understood in a strict literal sense, must relate to the final restoration of the Jews. (See the notes on Isa. li. 22. liv. 9. and compare Ezek. xxix. 28.)

He will discover thy sins.] He will discover how great thine iniquities are, by the remarkable judgments wherewith he punisheth thee. (Compare Job xx. 27.) The margin reads, *He will carry thee captive for thy sins:* in which sense the verb *galah* is used in the same verse.

CHAP. V.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this chapter in the Vulgar Latin is, *Oratio Jeremiæ, The Prayer of Jeremiah:* it is not writ in metre, as the foregoing chapters, but contains, like them, a pathetical complaint to God of the miserable condition of the Jews, with respect both to their spiritual and temporal state.

Ver. 1. *CONSIDER, and behold our reproach.*] Which we suffer from the heathen. (Compare ii. 15. iii. 61. Psal. lxxxix. 50, 51.)

Ver. 4. *We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us.*] When our country was in our own possession, we had free use of water and wood, which now we are forced to buy.

Ver. 5. *Our necks are under persecution.*] We are become slaves to our enemies, who *put an iron yoke upon our necks,* according to the threatening denounced by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 48.

Ver. 6. *We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians,* &c.] We have made ourselves slaves or tributaries to those people: which was done by the ceremony of *giving the hand,* a form used when an oath or covenant was entered into. (See Ezek. xvii. 18. Gen. xxiv. 2.) The Jews are often upbraided for the alliances they made with Egypt and Assyria, for which they are threatened with being forced to live there as exiles. (See Hos. vii. 11. ix. 3. xii. 1.) These two countries being the places whither many Jews fled for refuge from the calamities which threatened them at home; the prophecies that mention their return from their several dispersions, speak of Assyria and Egypt, as the principal places from whence they should return: as hath been observed in the notes upon Isa. xi. 16.

Ver. 7. *Our fathers have sinned, and are not,* &c.] See the note on Jer. xxxi. 29. The expression *is not,* or *are not,* is used of those who are departed out of this world. (See Gen. xlii. 13.)

Ver. 8. *Servants have ruled over us.*] Servants to the great men among the Chaldeans, and other strangers, are become our masters. (See Nehem. v. 15.)

Ver. 9. *We got our bread at the peril of our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness.*] If we fly to the most solitary places, in hopes to get a livelihood there, yet thither the enemy pursues us.

Ver. 10. *Our skin was black like an oven,* &c.] See iv. 8.

Ver. 11. *They ravished the women in Zion.*] See Isa. xiii. 6. Zech. xiv. 2.

Ver. 12. *Princes are hanged up by their hand.*] By the hand of their enemies.

The faces of elders were not honoured.] See iv. 16.

Ver. 13. *They took the young men to grind.*] To grind at the mill, was the common employment of slaves. (See Exod. xi. 5.) Such was the *pistrinum* among the Romans.

The children fell under the wood.] They made children turn the handle of the mill, till they fell down for weariness: so some explain it, with relation to the former part of the verse. But it may be understood of making them

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carry such heavy burdens of wood, that they fainted under the load.

Ver. 16. *The crown is fallen from our head.*] All our glory is at an end, together with the advantages of being thy people, and enjoying thy presence amongst us, by which we were distinguished from the rest of the world. (Compare Job xix. 9.) The word *crown* may signify both the kingdom and the priesthood: the *mitre* being sometimes called the *crown.* (See Zech. vi. 11.)

Ver. 17. *For these things our eyes are dim.*] See ii. 11.

Ver. 19. *Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever,* &c.] Our only hope is in the eternity and unchangeableness of thy nature; and that thou still governest the world, and orderest all the events of it; whereby thou art always able to help us, and art never forgetful of the promises which thou hast made to thy people. (Compare Psal. cii. 28. Habak. i. 12.)

Ver. 21. *Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned,* &c.] Do thou give us the grace of conversion and amendment, and then thou wilt remove thy heavy judgments, and restore us to that happiness and prosperity which we formerly enjoyed.

Ver. 22. *But thou hast utterly rejected us.*] Thou art resolved to cast off the Jews of this generation, and wilt not shew us any favour, till the seventy years of our captivity are expired.

END OF VOL. III.

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